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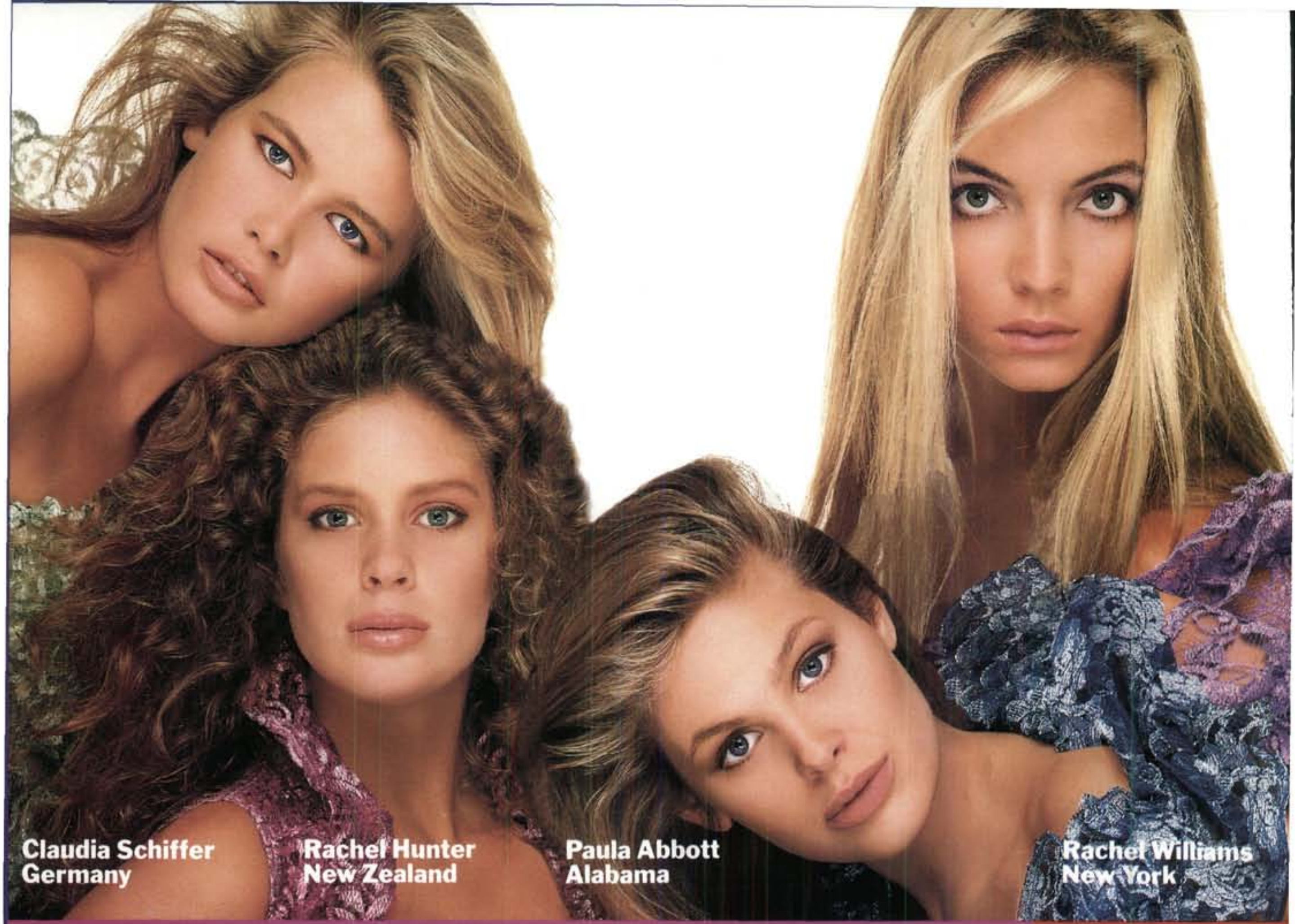
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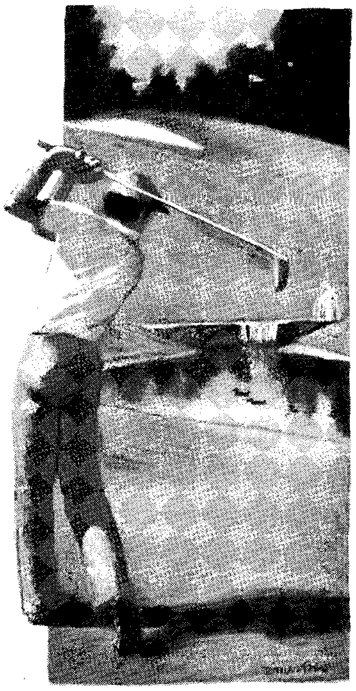

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

OCTOBER 9, 1989

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4
THE TALK OF THE TOWN 37
"FALL FASHIONS" . . . . . *Michael Crawford* 42
"THE TONGUE" . . . . . *Jamaica Kincaid* 44
"ALL SOULS'" (POEM) . . . . . *Dana Gioia* 46
"POLONAISE" (POEM) . . . . . *Derek Walcott* 52
A REPORTER AT LARGE (BURMA) . . . . . *Stan Sesser* 55
OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS (DOWSING) . . . . . *Carolyn Kraus* 97
THE THEATRE . . . . . *Edith Oliver* 125
AROUND CITY HALL . . . . . *Andy Logan* 126
BOOKS . . . . . *John Updike* 132

COVER: *William Steig*

DRAWINGS: *Robert Weber, Glen Baxter, Mick Stevens, Tom Cheney, Charles Barsotti, Peter Steiner, Bernard Schoenbaum, Danny Shanahan, Roz Chast, William Hamilton, Michael Maslin, Robert Mankoff, Edward Koren, Jack Ziegler, Dana Fradon, Victoria Roberts, Al Ross, Richard Cline, Sam Gross*

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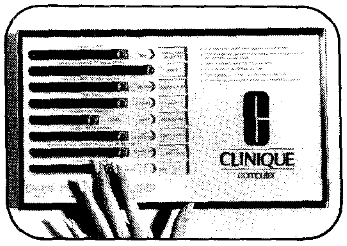

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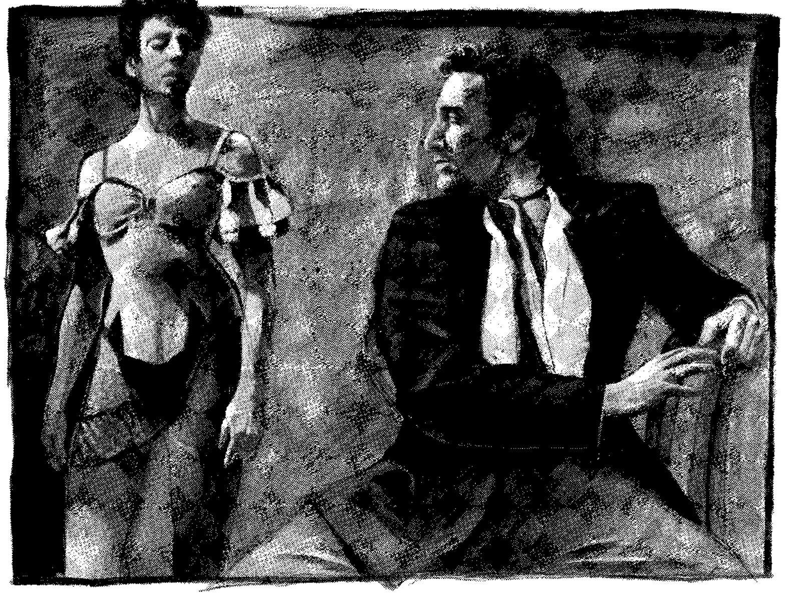
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

THE dim-wittedness of "Abel and Bela," the first of a pair of absurdist French satires by Robert Pinget currently at the Ubu Rep, is not the fault of the play's translator, Barbara Wright; her performance, as usual, is excellent, and she has even retained some of the verbal inventiveness indicated by the work's anagrammatic title. No, the problem is with the work itself, a dialogue between Abel (Robert Burke) and Bela (Peter Mackenzie), two dramatists who are attempting to compose the perfect play. Their observations about revolution and convention, reality and illusion—about the nature of theatre—are just not very interesting, even as satire. Set amid three banks of plush red movie-house seats, this adolescent bull session might be rechristened "Popcorn with André." (Mr. Burke resembles André Gregory, slightly.)

The evening's second half, "Architruc," is much more engaging. Again, the real star is the translator—in matters of conversion from French to English, the other major Barbara (Bray). But the actors have meatier roles, too. To his corpulent king of an unspecified realm Tom Lacy brings a marvellous *tristesse.* Jarlath Conroy handles professionally the part of Baga, a prime minister who diverts the monarch from thoughts of death by putting on elaborate costumes; one of these, a piece of lavender frippery straight out of the wardrobe of Edith Evans, is particularly fetching. If only the production as a whole had matched the playful quality of that dress. Or the punning spirit of the hurricane headline from a copy of *Le Monde* that a gentleman in the lobby was reading after the performance: "HUGO, HÉLAS," proclaimed the front-page banner, which we amended mentally to read "HÉLAS, PINGET."



René Ceballos and Gregory Mitchell in "Dangerous Games"

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8	9	10	11			

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.*)

THE AUNTS—Mia Dillon, Bethel Leslie, and Ann Wedgeworth in a play by Gary Bonasorte. Previews Oct. 3. Opens Oct. 4 at 7. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 307-7171.)

CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY—The season opener is **BESIDE HERSELF**, a new play by Joe Pintauro, directed by John Bishop. With Susan Bruce, Calista Flockhart, Lois Smith, and, in supporting roles, William Hurt, Melissa Joan Smith, and Ed Seamon. Previews begin Oct. 4. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

CLASSICAL DRAMA AND COMEDY OF JAPAN—Three different programs presented by the Kita Noh Theatre, a twenty-six-member troupe that includes the Nomura Kyogen Theatre. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Oct. 3 at 7:30, and Oct. 4 at 1:30 and 7:30.)

DANGEROUS GAMES—A pair of one-act dance dramas, called "Tango" and "Orfeo," conceived, choreographed, and directed by Graciela Daniele. Music by Astor Piazzolla and lyrics by William Finn. Previews begin Oct. 9. (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 246-0102.)

EQUITY LIBRARY THEATRE—The season kicks off with a production of **WONDERFUL TOWN**, the musical version of "My Sister Eileen." Directed by Adrienne Weiss. Opens Oct. 3 and will run through Oct. 22. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. 663-2028.)

MASTERGATE—Larry Gelbart's satire of the Iran-Contra affair. The large cast, directed by Michael Engler, includes Joseph Daly, Merrill Holtzman, and Priscilla Shanks. In previews. (Criterion Center Stage Right, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE SECRET RAPTURE—Blair Brown, Frances Conroy, and Mary Beth Hurt have the leading roles in David Hare's play, which had recent previews at the Public. Broadway previews begin Oct. 10. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

THE TALENTED TENTH—Richard Wesley's new play, directed by M. Neema Barnette, and with Richard Lawson. Previews begin Oct. 9. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

YORK THEATRE COMPANY—Presenting **FRANKIE**, a musical reworking of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein." The book is by George Abbott (who, along with Donald Saddler, is co-directing), the score is by Joseph Turin, and the lyrics are by Gloria Nissenson. Opens Oct. 6 at 8, and runs through Oct. 29. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366.)

RECENTLY OPENED

BIG HOTEL—The Ridiculous Theatre Company's revival of Charles Ludlam's 1967 play, directed by Everett Quinton. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes Oct. 22.)

CARNAGE, A COMEDY—Straight from performances at the Edinburgh Festival comes this Actors' Gang production, which was directed by Tim Robbins, who also wrote the script (with Adam Simon). (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Oct. 8.)

HOME GAMES—A comedy by Tom Ziegler, with John Braden, Kymberly Dakin, and Michael E. Knight. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810.)

HOTEL MARTINIQUE—A music-theatre piece by Kevin Malony that was inspired by Jonathan Kozol's articles on the homeless, published in this magazine. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Closes Oct. 22.)

JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (Reviewed in our issue of *3/13/89*, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE LADY IN QUESTION—Charles Busch's new play, set in Germany during the Second World War, is the perfect entertainment for a cool autumn evening. It's less pointedly a parody of one genre or movie than his last work, "Psycho Beach Party," was, and more a travesty of an entire week's worth of TNT programming, compressed into a single evening of theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

LEND ME A TENOR—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks are among the members of the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

LOVE LETTERS—Final performances of A. R. Gurney's two-character play. Oct. 3-8, Kate Nelligan and Treat Williams; Oct. 10-15, Joanna Gleason and John Rubinstein. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

ONLY KIDDING!—Jim Geoghan's comedy about standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. (One monologue, about a Greek restaurant, is a knockout.) The characters are an aging Catskills type; a young comedy team still scrambling for a foothold; a jumpy writer; and a beef-brained manager. All the actors do well, under the lively direction of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

ORPHEUS DESCENDING—Vanessa Redgrave heads the cast of Peter Hall's production of the Tennessee Williams play. Also with Kevin Anderson, Anne Twomey, and Tammy Grimes. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY—Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. Kevin Conway can seldom have been better or funnier than he is as Bronx-born Lawrence Garfinkle, and Janet Zarish plays his adversary. An import from the Hartford Stage Company. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

PRIVATES ON PARADE—Peter Nichols' satiric and profound comedy with music (book and lyrics by Nichols, score by Denis King) about a troupe of entertainers assigned to the British

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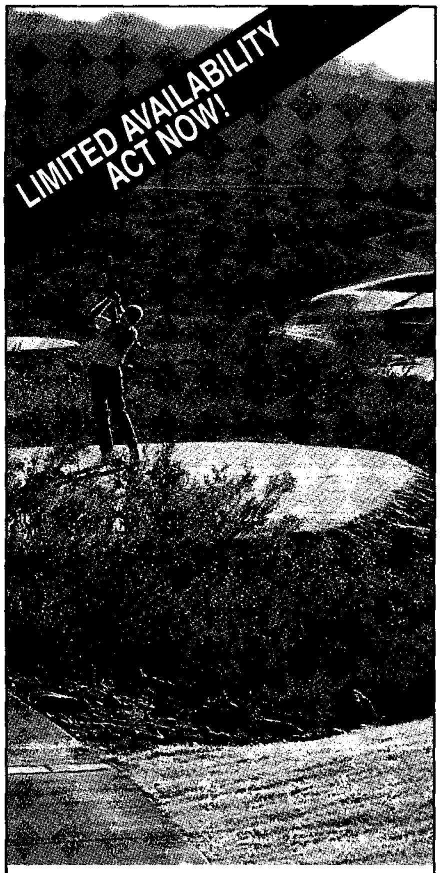

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Army in Malaysia in 1948. Jim Dale outdoes himself as the principal singer and dancer of the troupe, and Simon Jones is fine, too, as his commanding officer. Directed by Larry Carpenter. (9/4/89) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Oct. 15.)

SHIRLEY VALENTINE—Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Ellen Burstyn in the title, and only, role. Directed by Simon Callow. (2/27/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SHOWING OFF—As comedy revues go, this one—written by Douglas Bernstein and Denis Markell—isn't at all bad. The winning performances by Mr. Bernstein, Marilyn Pasekoff, Jason Graae, and Valerie Wright often make the material seem better than it is, but ultimately they don't compensate for the over-all smugness of what is essentially life-style comedy. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

SWEENEY TODD—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical, which had a brief run uptown last spring. Susan H. Schulman is the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

UBU REPERTORY THEATRE—Presenting **ABEL AND BELA** and **ARCHITRUC,** both by Robert Pinget. (15 W. 28th St. 679-7562. Closes Oct. 15.)

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL—Four fully staged short plays by four writers in their teens—Robert Kerr, Janet Allard, Debra Neff, and Alejandro Membreno. Talent and humor are apparent in each of them. (10/2/89) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 8.)

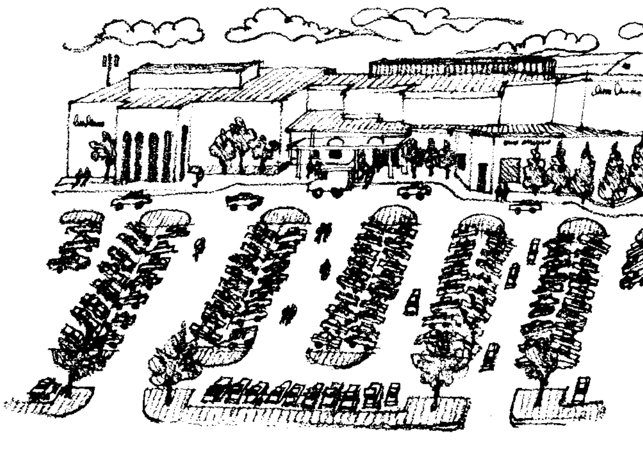
LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** *The longest-running long run* turned twenty-nine this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Karen Murphy, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Christine Lahti. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE KATHY AND MO SHOW: PARALLEL LIVES:** Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play. With Tony Randall and A. Mapa. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. It is acted to perfection by, among others, Ron Leibman, Charles Brown, and Jessica Walter, under the impeccable direction of Gene Saks. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

DANCE

ALLEGRA KENT is coaching Darci Kistler in the title role of George Balanchine's "La Sonnambula" ("The Sleepwalker")—a part in which Kent herself was once acclaimed. Candle in hand, the sleepwalker has rushed onstage, skimming the floor on her points, and has just encountered the poet. No, Kistler hasn't done it quite right. Be more dramatic, Kent tells her; lengthen the line of your arm if you want. Nuances in how the sleepwalker acts tell the audience what she knows. Her response to the poet is a kind of *involuntary comprehension*—"it's like echolocation." Kent adds, "You've sensed he's there and *then* he stops you." This is the Balanchine laboratory, where characters are brewed from all sorts of unlikely materials: a troubled heroine, a healthy bat, a Romantic ideal.

The moment is part of a recent documentary, "Dancing for Mr. B: Six Balanchine Ballerinas," produced and co-directed by Anne Belle (with Deborah Dickson), to be given its première at the New York Film Festival this Saturday, October 7. Belle's movie interweaves performance footage, on-camera interviews, and views of the subjects teaching or coaching; the unwavering focus is the Balanchine legacy. The six ballerinas represent most of Balanchine's American years; they are, in order of their first association with him, Mary Ellen Moylan, Maria Tallchief, Melissa Hayden, Allegra Kent, Merrill Ashley, and Darci Kistler. What they actually say will not be surprising to someone who has read "Balanchine's Ballerinas" or other collections of interviews, but to watch them say it, to hear the order in which they marshal their details, and to study how they pass along technique and repertory to the next generation is a remarkable lesson in style. One wishes that someone would make a movie entirely of several dancers coaching the same role, or several roles within the same ballet. Even more than performance tapes, it is records of the coaching and the teaching that will save this art for dancers to come.



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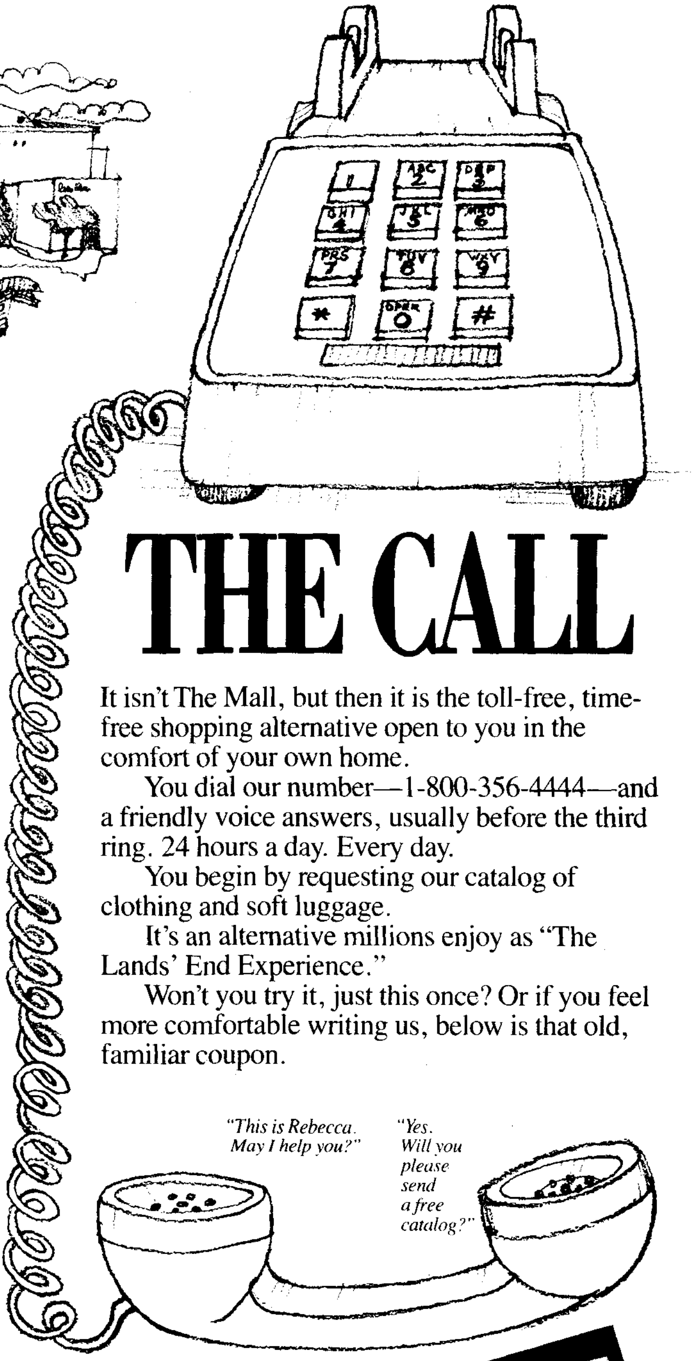

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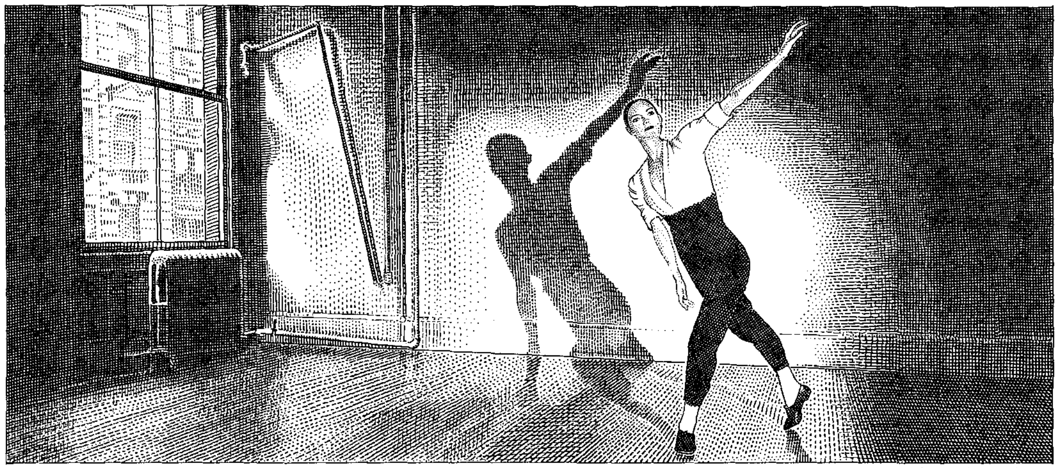

Lucinda Childs

MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY—Opening performances of a three-week engagement. Oct. 3 at 7:30: A celebration of Miss Graham's ninety-fifth birthday, with Mikhail Baryshnikov in the première of "American Document," which is narrated by Cecilia Peck. Also on the bill are "Night Chant" and "El Penitente." . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 8: "Diversion of Angels," "Deep Song," "Dark Meadow," and two short works choreographed by company members. . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 8, Oct. 7 at 2, and Oct. 8 at 7:30: "Plain of Prayer," "Night Journey," "Frontier," and three Denishawn-Graham solo works. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 8 and Oct. 8 at 2: "Embattled Garden," "Errand Into the Maze," "Steps in the Street," and "Acts of Light." . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 8: "American Document," "Night Chant," and "El Penitente." . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 8: "Frescoes," "Lamentation," "Cortege of Eagles," and company choreography. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Oct. 22.)

LUCINDA CHILDS DANCE COMPANY—Opening a week-long engagement. Oct. 10 at 7:30 and Oct. 11 at 8: "Calyx," Dance No. 1 from "Dance," and the New York première of "Mayday." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Oct. 15.)

AMERICAN INDIAN DANCE THEATRE—Final performances by this twenty-four-member troupe. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 3-6 at 8, Oct. 7 at 2 and 8, Oct. 8 at 2 and 7:30.)

DIANE JACOBOWITZ DANCE THEATRE—In "Babel," "Queen Anne's Birthday," and "Earth Murmurs." (Dia Art Foundation, 155 Mercer St. Oct. 5-6 at 8. For reservations, call 1-718 467-2725.)

XXY DANCE/MUSIC—In "Nuts (Homage to Freud)." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-077. Oct. 5-7 at 8, and Oct. 8 at 3. Through Oct. 15.)

TRIBUTE

Much of the power of the NAMES Project quilt comes from its grass roots. The names of people who have died of AIDS are illuminated by what Ruskin called the Lamp of Life: like Gothic carvings, the quilt's panels bear the imprint of the hands that made them. The grid into which the panels have been fitted serves requirements of access, storage, and transportation rather than visual impact. An exhibition about the quilt (but not including it) has been created by the graphic designer Ivan Chermayeff, and is on view through October 14 at the gallery of the Parsons School of Design (2 West 13th Street). The show is a tribute to the quilt's makers, a call for increased public support for treating and curing people with AIDS, and a visual event whose power lies beyond design.

NIGHT LIFE

IF you want to dance barefoot, meet someone named Trip, or read about "all species rights" while sipping organic wine, Wetlands is the place for you. The Tribeca club, which opened last February, is a clean, spacious, two-story shrine to hippiedom—a left-wing Dome of the Rock. The club is decorated with black-light posters, tie-dyed ceiling hangings, and a huge Woodstock-inspired mural (it's a hippie's dream pad), but the intention isn't kitsch. Contrary to what one might expect from the retro-chic club scene, Wetlands' identification with the sixties is for real, and has as much to do with politics as with music or fashion. As you enter the club, the first thing you see is a sort of political-action study center: a large wall calendar listing community events; a bulletin board with headings such as "Recycling," "Planet Care," and "People Care"; reams of pamphlets, leaflets, and petitions; and, the topper, a Day-Glo-painted Volkswagen van offering T-shirts, bumper stickers ("Question Authority"), and Freak Brothers comics. The club is politically correct to a fault, from the graffiti on the walls to the Ben & Jerry's Peace Pops sold at the snack bar.

We visited Wetlands on a Tuesday, which is Grateful Dead night. The stage was occupied by Laughing Bones, who not only sound like the Dead but even have a logo suspiciously similar to the Dead's grinning-skull emblem. To judge from the crowd, Wetlands seems to attract not so much Summer of Love veterans who have kept the faith as a new crop of college-age hippies, and while we can't say for certain whether these tie-dyed youths share Wetlands' activism they clearly have the look down. (All in all, the difference between these weekly gatherings and an actual Dead show is mostly a matter of scale—for stadium-shy Dead Heads, this might be the answer.) As we watched the band go through its paces, a young woman standing next to us made a sweeping gesture with her arm as she explained to a young man, "This whole thing is not me." But, looking around us, we were pretty sure that she was an exception.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the lobby, people come and go talking of the Forty-fourth Street Marching and Chowder Club, which used to meet here, and of Lerner and Loewe, who knocked out "My Fair Lady" here, and of **MONTGOMERY, PLANT & STRITCH,** a Houston-based vocal trio that is currently appearing in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Beginning Oct. 3, Jeff Harnar pays tribute to the songwriting team of Betty Comden and Adolph Green. The engagement will run for a little under three weeks. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—On the back wall of this jazz club there's a neon version of the Manhattan skyline, with a crescent moon and two stars attendant upon it—one of the best examples of inert-gas folk art we know of. **BILLY ECKSTINE,** whose famous baritone comes equipped with a wide vibrato, holds sway Oct. 3-8; jazz singer Angela Bofill starts up on Oct. 10. Music from nine. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. **RICHIE BEIRACH** commands the Steinway through Oct. 7, with able accompaniment from **RON MC CLURE** and **ADAM NUSSBAUM.** Beginning Oct. 9, **CHICO FREEMAN,** a formidable sax man out of Chicago (and the son of another Chi-town sax power, Von Freeman), takes up residence; pianist **JOHN HICKS** and bassist **DON PATE** help out. First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Pretty much everything about this jazz room is nice: the long rows of tables covered with pink linen, the bijou bandstand, the view of the bandstand from the bar, and the view out the window of Vaux & Withers' gabled Victorian courthouse. Organist **BROTHER JACK MC DUFF** and his quintet make a visit Oct. 3-8, and **ARTHUR PRYSOCK,** a veteran jazz crooner, gets under way on Oct. 10. Music from nine-thirty.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, three walls of Vertès murals, and singer **JULIE WILSON.** Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, singer **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CAT CLUB, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—This room, which caters to thrash-metal buffs and cooler heads on weeknights, opens its doors on Sundays to swing-music fans, most of whom come to Lindy. Feet jitter, skirts twirl, and smiles break out everywhere. The New York Swing Dance Society organizes these gatherings, and on Oct. 8 it presents the Lynn Oliver orchestra, a fourteen-piece band partial to Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and the brothers Dorsey. Music from eight.

DAN LYNCH, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a lot of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar. The place brightens up considerably at ten with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

EAGLE TAVERN, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—An Irish bar, way out on the

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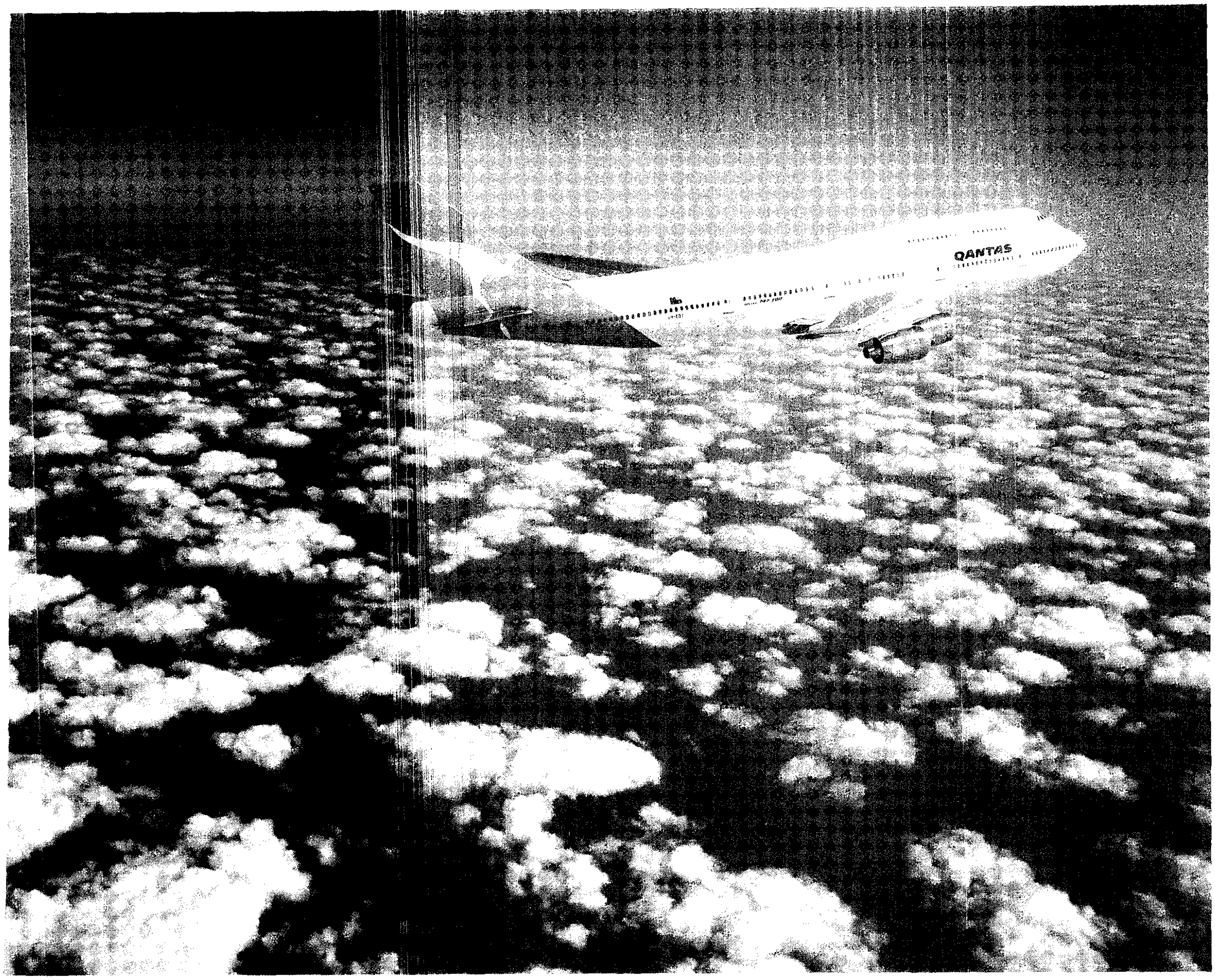
For 70 years, we've taken people home to see the same old thing.



No one can take you to see the beauty and wonder of Australia and the South Pacific like Qantas. In fact, we've flown more people Down Under than any other airline. With the advantage of nearly 70 years of experience. Because we're not just taking you Down Under. We're taking you home.

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Western edge of town, where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones, and the world across the Hudson flashes its come-hither signs. The back room has Hibernian sounds on Fridays. The trio Ellis Island, which includes button-accordion player Billy McComiskey, performs on Oct. 6. Sets at nine and ten-thirty.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte.* Pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** who for many years served with distinction as Ella Fitzgerald's music director, performs in a trio Oct. 3-8; singer **MARK MURPHY** begins a week-long gig on Oct. 10. Mondays are set aside for guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** who was known as Rhubarb Red back in the twenties and thirties, when he was an itinerant country picker. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—The kind of classy place where no sooner do they give you a plate than they take it away. Fortune Garden is decorated for a greenhouse effect, and the priorities here are Chinese food, hanging plants, and jazz. **GENE BERTONCINI** and **HARVIE SWARTZ,** a guitar-bass duo, claim Oct. 2 and Oct. 9; pianist **CAROL BRITTO** works with bassist **MAJOR HOLLEY** Oct. 3-8; and **WALTER NORRIS** (piano) and **LISLE ATKINSON** (bass) punch in on Oct. 10, for six nights. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Turn-of-the-century New York Sunday *Herald* posters and Hirschfeld caricatures on the walls, and, next to the brass-railed partition between the bar and the dining room, a modern Steinway. **STEVE KUHN,** a pianist who has served with John Coltrane and Stan Getz, among others, chairs a trio Oct. 3-7; **JUDY CARMICHAEL,** a Californian whose main inspiration comes from Harlem—that is, from the stride-piano style of Fats Waller and James P. Johnson—begins a five-night run on Oct. 10. Music from nine-thirty.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the "Hoboken sound" and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory may give them a boost. Current front-runners include the **HENRY ROLLINS BAND** and the Cows on Oct. 6, and **SCRUFFY THE CAT** and Full Time Men on Oct. 7.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Henry VIII and a unicorn on the walls, well-heeled cats on the banquettes, and pop-jazz singer **MEL TORMÉ**—also known as the Velvet Fog—on the bandstand, through Oct. 7. Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-fifteen; Fridays and Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen; and Sundays at seven. Dining.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A new, shiny, ninety-seat cabaret, sixty-five floors above all the honking and shouting. (It and the neighboring Rainbow Room—same telephone number, same stratospheric prices—are reached by taking a whistling express elevator; some people observe silence on the way up.) On clear nights you can see the lights of Yonkers and Tenafly. Steven Davis—a baritone who sings in the tradition of Sinatra and Como, and whose father was a topnotch yodeler—remains here through Oct. 7. Jerry Herman gets started on Oct. 10. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This rock establishment, which recently moved from the East Village to the former temple of excess Studio 54, is still a place where the customer is not always right. The signature feature of the previous address, the giant Big Brother video screen, has been preserved intact. Upstairs in the balcony, there are designated seating areas for industry and non-industry people. The excitable rockabilly-ist **JERRY LEE LEWIS** performs Oct. 7 at nine.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. **LESTER BOWIE,** a versatile trumpeter, a co-founder of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and a razzmatazz showman, leads a conglomerate called Brass Fantasy Oct. 3-8. Cornettist **NAT ADDERLEY** steps in on Oct. 10, with a hard-swinging sextet that includes **SONNY FORTUNE;** the party ends six nights later. Shows from ten. Dining.

Sweetwaters, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball, and a house photographer who offers to take a picture of you and your lady. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B.; the audience shouts encouragement as the band sings about "doin' it all night long" and "taking care of that thing." There's a lively bar, too, separated from the paying customers by tinted glass. Oct. 5-7 belongs to the **STYLISTICS,** a Philadelphia group that hit the charts in the early seventies with such breezy sweet-soul lullabies as "You Are Everything" and "You Make Me Feel Brand New."

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—A thirty-three-year-old three-ring circus. The ringmaster, a bearded gentleman named Art D'Lugoff, sometimes employs a barker to steer traffic to his multiple entertainments. In the basement, on Mondays after nine, salsa bands play for dancing, listening, and shouting. **DR. JOHN,** the gravel-voiced son of a New Orleans appliance-store owner, holds forth Oct. 6-7. . . . ¶ Back upstairs, in the Terrace Bar, where business and conversation are often at boom level, bassist **REGGIE WORKMAN** and pianist **JOHN MEDESKI** put their heads together beginning Oct. 3. On Tuesdays, the visiting duo trades sets with **HELLMAN'S ANGELS,** a string trio whose head angel, **DAPHNE HELLMAN,** plays the harp. Music from ten.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—One of the few places below the surface of New York that deserve landmark status. It's also one of the few places anywhere that have a notable (if that's the right word) light fixture—one that Charles Mingus K.O.'d while trying to reason with the late Max Gordon, and that Mr. Gordon, who was a preservationist as well as a businessman, decided to leave in Mingusized condition. **DOROTHY DONEGAN**—whose shows usually involve a whirligig display of Art Tatum-style piano and a fair amount of mugging and foot-stomping—performs Oct. 3-8. A trio consisting of **GERI ALLEN, CHARLIE HADEN,** and **PAUL MOTIAN** starts up on Oct. 10. Mondays are in the hands of the **MEL LEWIS** big band. Music after ten.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke-veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. The **WAILERS,** once the flagship of the late Bob Marley, do some skanking Oct. 2-3. The rest of the schedule: Blues Traveller on Oct. 5; House of Assembly on Oct. 6; Max Creek on Oct. 7; Brewer & Shipley on Oct. 8; the Lion Force Reggae Band on Oct. 9; and Kingfish on Oct. 10.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

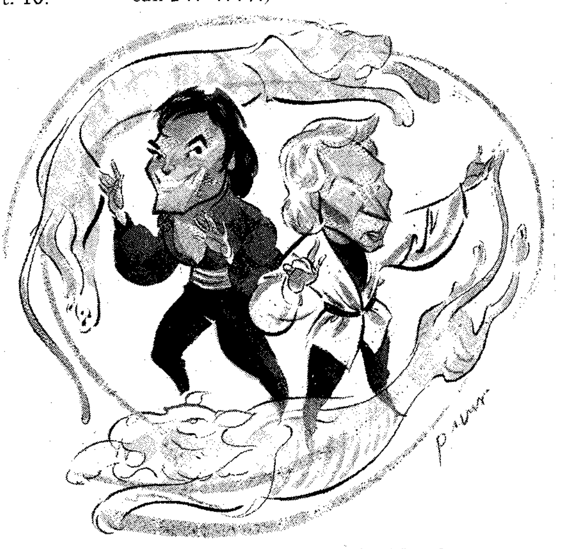
THE frisking at the front door may confirm all Janet Jackson's fears about the "State of the World," but everything else about stepping into the Sound Factory, on West 27th Street, is like free-falling into a time warp. Where are the lasers, the videos, the stuffed divans, and the tufted divas of indeterminate origin that we've come to expect as hosts *du soir*? Hasn't the management ever heard of *boîte* tables too small for two clutch bags, oxidized-brass railings, and billiard rooms filled with faux-de-old-dough trappings of style? Surely they can't expect anyone to desert M.K., Au Bar, Carmelita's, or China Club for a vast, raw space darker and smokier than a Ridley Scott film, a sawed rather than parqueted dance floor, and risers even Peter Brook might find too rustic, all barely lit by several tracks of gelled spots hovering around a mirrored ball?

Precisely. Those who descend on the Sound Factory in the dead of night have less need for au couranteries than Jessye Norman has to sing Andrew Lloyd Webber. What they come for, as the club's name implies, is the chance to experience their stomachs turned into woofers, their sinuses operating as tweeters, and their spines plugged into reverb. At the Sound Factory, you have no need to manufacture any of your own. This is disco as it was meant to be. And interlopers soon sense from all around them that they best face the music, shut up, and dance. Not exactly the way Fred said it to Ginger, but then she never had him frisked.

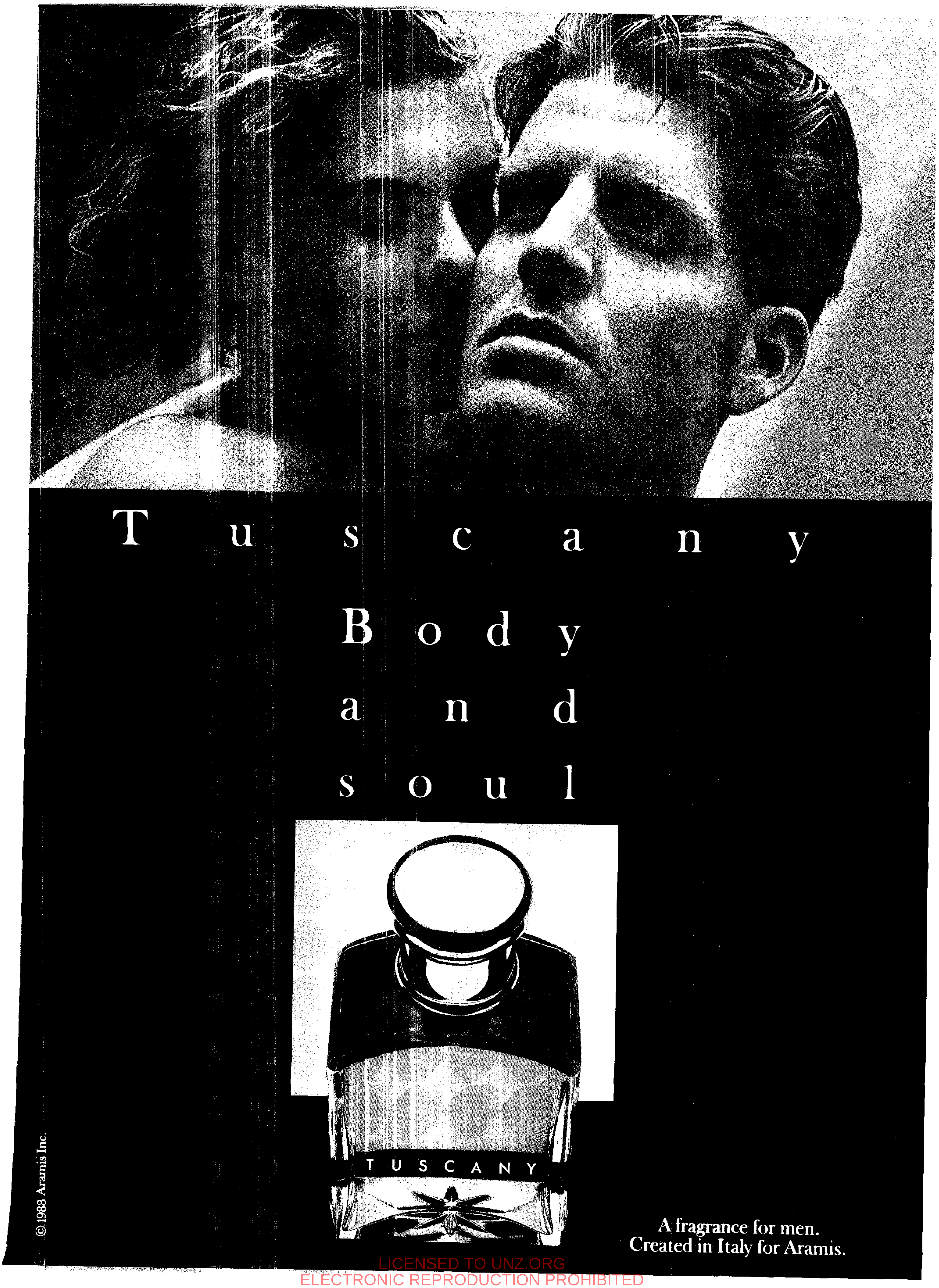
IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Next Wave Festival—This year's performing-arts showcase starts with performances by Laurie Anderson of a new work, "Empty Places." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Oct. 3 at 7, Oct. 4-7 at 8, Oct. 8 at 3 and 7, and Oct. 10-11 at 8. Through Oct. 15.) . . . ¶ Reinhild Hoffmann and her dance company in "Machandel," adaptations of Grimms fairy tales. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., about a block east of Flatbush Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Oct. 11 at 7. Through Oct. 15.)

Siegfried & Roy—These two performers do classic illusions: they levitate anything not battened down, they saw women in half and pack them up into little boxes, and they keep transforming girls and cats into Roy. The illusions themselves are expertly achieved, the show is shrewdly paced, and there are lots of animals, many with big teeth. There are also lots of skits that seem to have been devised by the spirit of Josephine Baker channelling the spirit of Liberace while leafing through the Encyclopædia Britannica with members of Metallica. (One is set on a Napoleonic-era battleground, with armies outfitted in spiked, befeathered helmets, garter belts, and G-strings to lift and separate.) The celebrated white tigers don't do much, but they're spectacular even at rest. As Siegfried notes, it's a show that demands "a labor of love and a lot of meat." (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. Through Oct. 15. For information about schedules and tickets, call 247-4777.)



Roy Horn and Siegfried Fischbacher of Siegfried & Roy


Tuscany
Body and soul
TUSCANY
A fragrance for men.
Created in Italy for Aramis.

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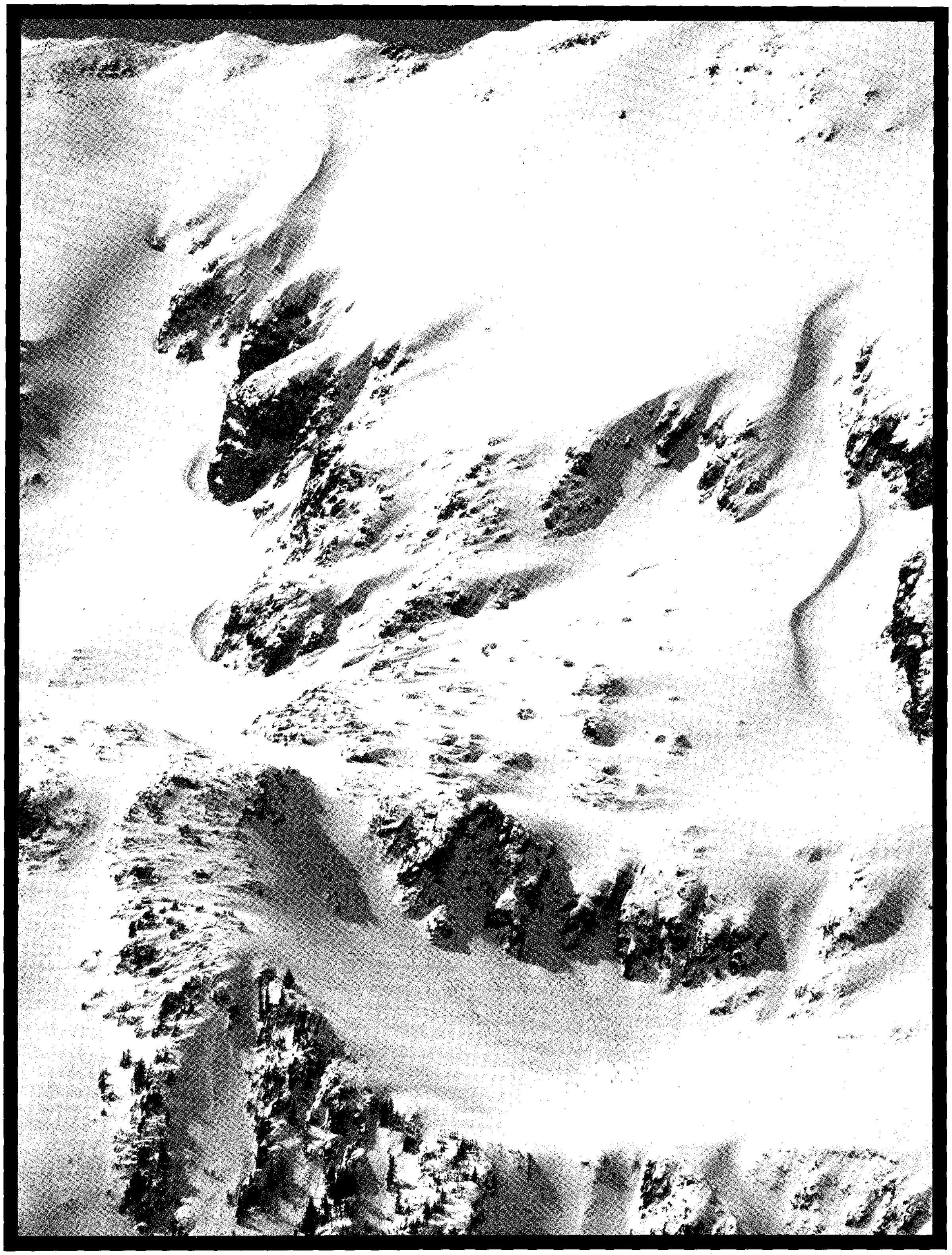
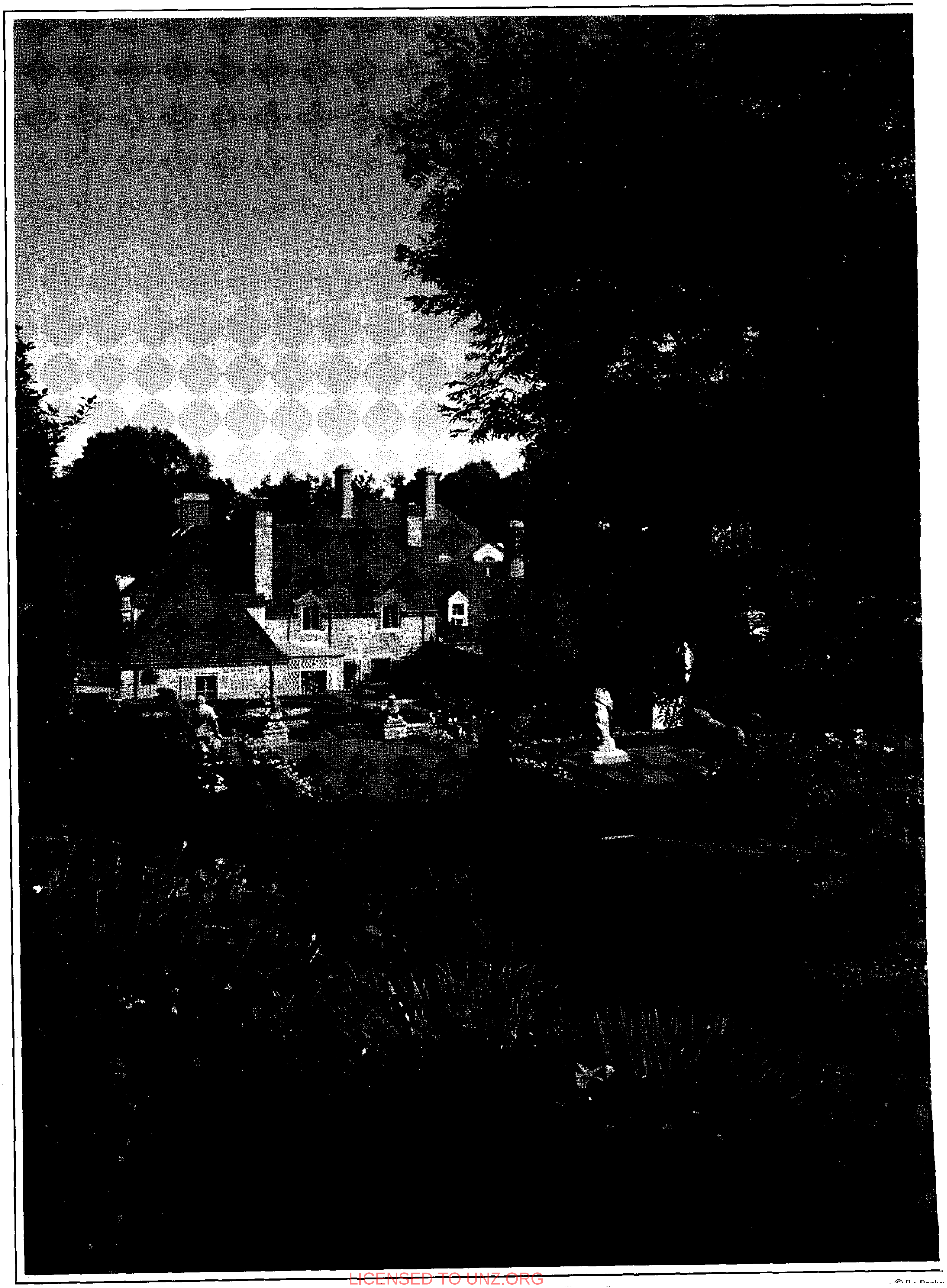


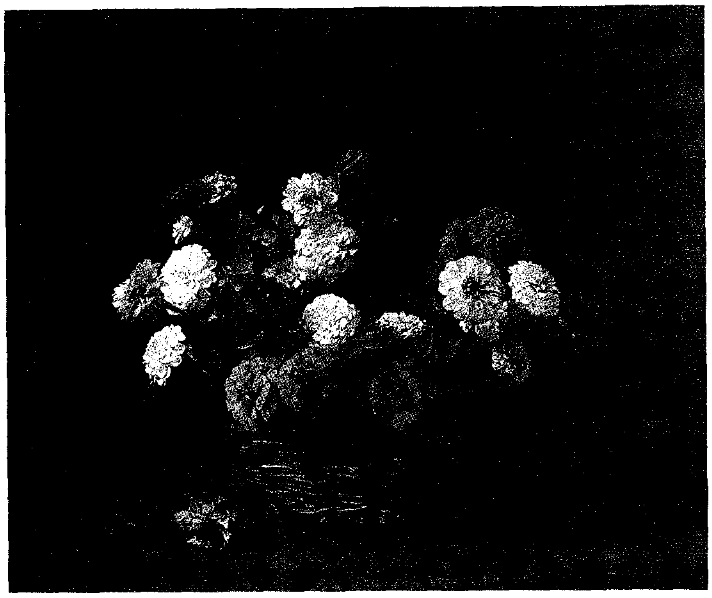
Aspen Central Reservations 1·800·262·7736 Snowmass Central Reservations 1·800·332·3245.
The Little Nell-The Snowmass Club: Aspen Skiing Company Hotels 1·800·525·6200.

Last year, people skied
on champagne powder,
windblown pack, groomed,
corn snow, cold smoke, frozen
granular, firm, good crud,
bottomless powder, sugar,
machine tilled, crust, hero
powder, buffed snow, man
made, corduroy, ball bearings,
velvet, cut up powder, spring
snow, ballroom, and acre
after acre of virgin powder.

[*Eskimos may have more words
for snow, but we have more lifts.*]

THE ASPENS
SNOWMASS • BUTTERMILK
ASPEN MOUNTAIN





The Collection of John T. Dorrance, Jr.

The homes and families of Philadelphia's Main Line have long been known for their quiet elegance and refined taste. The John T. Dorrance, Jr. Collection is the perfect embodiment of that tradition. Assembled by Mr. John T. Dorrance, Jr., son of the founder of the Campbell Soup Company and the company's chairman for 22 years, the collection is centered on an extraordinary range of European and American paintings with an especially fine group of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and Modern works. Also included are excellent works in porcelain, silver and jade as well as important French and English furniture.

The Collection of John T. Dorrance, Jr. will be dispersed in two auctions to be held in New York from October 18 through October 21.

The exhibition in New York will open Saturday, October 14 at 1 pm.

For further information and catalogues, please call Gail Cooley, (212) 606-7186. Sotheby's, 1334 York Avenue, New York, NY 10021.

Henri Fantin-Latour, *Zinnias*, signed and dated *91*, oil on canvas, 19¾ by 23⅜ in. (50 by 59 cm.). Auction estimate: 1,500,000-2,000,000.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

MOST, though by no means all, art that leans heavily on concept can too easily be transferred to the page—or to the agenda of an editorial meeting. Occasionally, however, a cool and strictly thematic concept is tied to its realization with pure verve. Such is the case with Barbara Bloom's installation at Jay Gorney Modern Art, on view through October 14.

Bloom's hilariously unmistakable theme is narcissism. But to get this one-dimensional point across she has devised an environment so exactly calibrated, both as a whole and in its details, that the viewer is instantly plunged into an exquisitely teeny cosmos gone solipsistically and thunderously awry. The room—deep loveliness—is a Wedgwood-green neoclassical octagon that evokes the High Enlightenment architecture of Robert Adam and in fact any ideally elegant, rational interior between the eras of Marie Antoinette and Jane Austen. Its walls are signed at the bottom. There are white plaster busts of the artist. There are several vitrines—those staples of late-eighties art—containing cameos of the artist striking different classic attitudes, pristine chocolates featuring the artist's silhouette, and a row of bound volumes bearing such titles as "My Echo, My Shadow, and Me," "Ad Personam Ad Nauseam," and, no doubt a *salonnière* bio in the as-told-to mode, "Une Diseuse." One case, containing tombstones (birthdates only), includes the epitaph "She traveled the world to seek beauty." Best of all, there are four Louis XVI-style chairs upholstered to perfection in pale green-gray silk, each printed in a very special and meaningful repeat pattern: Bloom's profile, her signature, her astrological chart, and—yikes! don't let them eat candy!—a dentist's X-ray of her most incisive teeth.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The Velázquez exhibition, of thirty-eight paintings (mostly royal commissions), brings together nearly half of this master's œuvre. . . . ¶ "Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting from the Forbidden City" features what most scholars regard as the finest examples of late Chinese painting. The variety of sophisticated styles explored during the Qing dynasty is cause for both endless curiosity and a rethinking of the history of abstraction. Through Oct. 29. . . . ¶ "The New Vision": In celebration of photography's hundred and fiftieth anniversary, the museum has put together a show that presents work made between the World Wars by Europeans and Americans. The selection is from the museum's Ford Motor Company Collection. Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Pioneering Cubism": Georges Braque once recalled his working relationship with Pablo Picasso as being like that of "two mountain climbers roped together." This in-depth appreciation of their works from between 1907 and 1914 sometimes ventures to indicate who was leading the climb, but mostly it presents a host of evidence (almost four hundred paintings, collages, construction sculptures, and drawings) pointing to the heights these masters would later scale. . . . ¶ An installation by Matt Mullican of computer-based works, including multimedia plans for a non-utopian model city. It's a handsome exhibition, with, unfortunately, a metaconcept that seems half empty and not a little coy. Through Oct. 24. . . . ¶ Photographs by Aaron Siskind from the permanent collection. Through Oct. 10. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—In this first American retrospective of works by Mario Merz, the Arte Povera artist is represented by more than eighty pieces from the nineteen-fifties up to the present, among them several large installations created specifically for the interior and exterior of the museum. Through Nov. 26. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A show of oils, watercolors, prints, and drawings by Edward Hopper. The hundred and fifty works span the artist's career, and are drawn from the museum's collection. Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ A current show of works acquired over the past fifteen years provides a fascinating example of institutional collecting. Through Oct. 15. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—The museum's twenty-fifth National Print Exhibition (eighty-two works by about fifty artists) will focus on developments in the field since the mid-eighties, such as the increasing use of serial imagery. Starts Oct. 6. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—George Ohr (1857-1918): His elaborate modernist pottery confounded many during his lifetime, and this retrospective, of more than ninety glazed and bisque works, suggests that the "mad potter of Biloxi" might have felt more at home in the late twentieth century. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

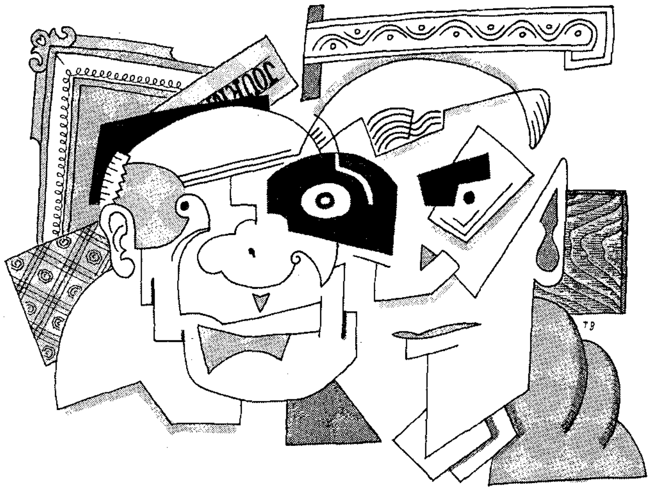
ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—An exhibition of paintings and prints by the Japanese artist Jakuchū (1716-1800), which includes ten of the thirty hanging scrolls that compose his masterwork "Colorful Realm of Living Beings." Starts Oct. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

CHINA INSTITUTE, 125 E. 65th St.—"Chinese Women Artists 1300-1912": Forty-five traditional paintings on scrolls, album leaves, and fans by fifteen artists who represent all the major regional flower-painting schools. Starts Oct. 7. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Nineteenth-century jewelry from the museum's collection. A well-presented, spiffy show that is organized in neat categories appropriate to the categorical imperatives of the Victorian period: materials and techniques peculiar to the age, such as tortoiseshell and human hair, filigree and *pietra dura;* preoccupations, such as flowers and other natural specimens; revivalism, especially of styles of the then newly excavated ancient world; and jeweller stars of the day, in particular Giuliano (who worked in London) and the influential Castellani (of Rome and Naples), both of whom popularized neo-Etruscan and neoclassical designs. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GROLIER CLUB, 47 E. 60th St.—A show of more than a hundred and fifty books, manuscripts, and drawings selected from Philip Hofer's 1984 bequest to Harvard University's Houghton Library. Included are books illustrated by Picasso and Matisse, a hand-colored copy of Albrecht Dürer's "Apocalypse" (1498), and drawings by Raoul Dufy and by Maillol. Through Nov. 26. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Gardens and Ghettos," an exhibition of more than three hundred works made by or for Italian Jews. The show is divided into four periods: architectural fragments and antiquities from the Roman Empire, the Era of the City States (1300-1550), and the Era of the Ghettos (1550-1870) occupy the first floor, while paintings and sculptures from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are on the second floor. . . . ¶ "Exodus and Exile: 2,000 Years in Ancient Israel," an archeological exhibition tracing some of the cultural shifts and political cataclysms between 1200 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. that, bit by bit, transformed the Israelite kingdom into an international religious community—the birth, in short, of Jewish identity in the modern sense. A few objects, such as ancient mosaics and synagogue reliefs, have not been seen in this country before, and while they represent a fragmented and elusive story the show's attractive, playful installation is informative. (Open Mondays, except Oct. 9, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, except Oct. 8, from 11 to 6. On Sunday, Oct. 8, the museum will be open from 10 to 1.)



Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—"Exploring Rome: Piranesi and His Contemporaries": During the eighteenth century, artists flocked to Rome from throughout Europe and produced drawings of grand neoclassic architectural fantasies. This show includes some fine examples of them, notably Robert Adam's sketches of picturesque fantasy ruins set in typical Italian landscapes; Giovanni Paolo Panini's watercolors of soaring barrel-vaulted arcades with proper ladies and gents frolicking about them; and some caprices by artists who never even made it to Rome. But the grandeur of Piranesi—whose works are the centerpiece of this fine display—is without rival, be it in feverishly dark etchings of monumental prisons or in drawings for vault and wall decorations that transpose the pomp of heraldry to a symphonic scale. Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ This modest show paying tribute to Jean Cocteau on his centenary is comically, Waspily un-Cocteau. The array of letters, sketches, "little magazines," and autographed scores in dim hallway cases, over which one must lean to see the drawings—for instance, of Jean Marais, and of Raymond Radiguet, Cocteau's great love—hanging on the wall, tends to make viewers look like squinting lepidopterists. Perhaps better thus pinned, however, than not pinned at all. Through Nov. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

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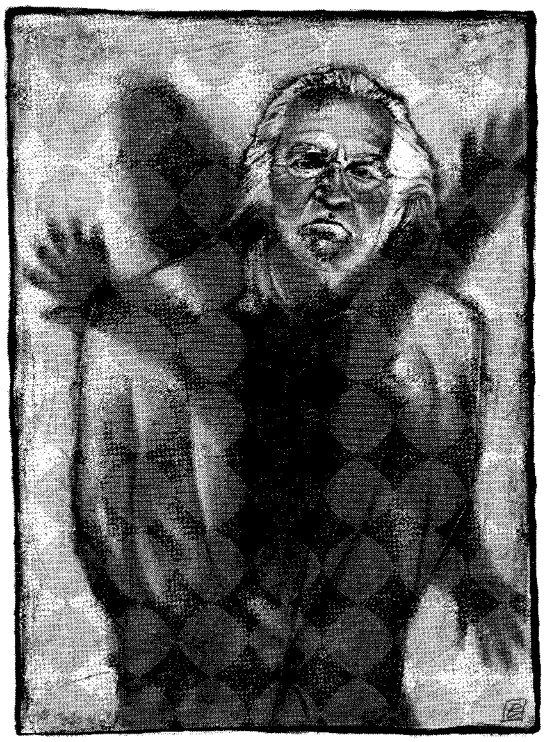

Mario Merz

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Fantasy Furniture": Kitsch takes on epic proportions with this remarkable display of bizarre nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century furniture lovingly assembled by Bruce Newman, owner of New York's most jaw-dropping antique store, Newel Art Galleries. This show includes lacquered colonial exotica from the Brighton Pavilion; grotesque carved *torchères* of the Devil and his mistress in contemporary dress; rotund bears climbing up the legs of a desk; horn and antler extravaganzas; Victorian chairs and settees upholstered in thick and luscious fabric tubes; and blackamoors, frolicking putti, and nymphs from the Belle Époque, which even in this context bring new meaning to kitsch. Through Oct. 22. . . . ¶ George Bellows' rich lithographs, as this show demonstrates, chronicled the gritty turn-of-the-century urban scene—public showers, the fights, the pedestrian bustle under the El. Less engaging than his public scenes are the smaller, more intimate portraits, from the early twenties, of family and friends. Through Oct. 29. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—There is a certain predictability in the way the museum has tackled chaos, the theme of its current show. But some of the works on display are standouts, especially Orshi Drozdik's weird scattering of porcelain objects on a lead sheet; and Cady Noland's "Model with Entropy" and "Celebrity Trash Spill"—brilliant examples of the city-dump-to-institutional-lost-and-found aesthetic genre. Through Nov. 26. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—Weathervanes and whirligigs, carousel animals and cigar-store Indians—these are among the hundred-plus works of folk art on loan from the Shelburne Museum, in Vermont. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Stephen Antonakos—A sculptor who has pushed his splendid juxtapositions of colored light into the category of painting with these new works on wood panels. This uninspired solution to the dilemma of presenting light in a modest, collectible unit is, fortunately, outweighed by brilliant saturated light in such colors as pumpkin and coral. Through Oct. 14. (Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St.)

Jonathan Silver—A dramatic, expressionistic, and rather literal sculptural mise en scène, including large-scale figures made of clay and plaster that are reminiscent of the sculptor George Segal's protagonists, as well as of Gogol's. Through Oct. 7. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Tony Soulié—Very handsome and inconsequential abstract painterly paintings from, yes, the next generation of the School of Paris. Through Oct. 21. (Cadé, 1045 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Donald Sultan—Large, elegant, jet-black charcoal drawings of orbs—some rounded like eggs, others nippled like lemons—and smaller drawings of roses. All the works are choked by their own facility. Through Oct. 5. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

"Lost and Found: The Object Transformed"—A display of delightful small assembled objects, including Donald Lipski's museum of his oddball *objets* in a revolving Timex display case, a Richard Long stone circle, some Gilbert and George collages, a fine John Chamberlain crushed sculpture, and an insipid little machine of two waving butterflies by the usually magnetic Rebecca Horn. Through Oct. 14. (Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

"House of Miracles: Votive Sculpture from Northeastern Brazil"—Brazil produces more votive healing requests than any other nation, and the results are often marvels of universal folk sculpture. This show attempts to simulate the ordered chaos of a votive chapel and contains rows, mounds, cases, and curtains of crudely carved legs, hands, arms, breasts, human figures, cow udders, ears of corn, tractors, and hoes. Some look Cycladic, others Oceanic; most are delightful and a shade spooky. Through Dec. 31. (Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. Opens daily, except Mondays, at noon.)

Short List—**yves klein,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through Oct. 28); **yuri kuper,** Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through Oct. 14); **giacomo manzù,** Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through Nov. 3); **ethel schwabacher,** Schlesinger, 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St. (through Oct. 7); **joe zucker,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 28).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Frederick Brown—These brassy, full-face portraits of such black musicians as Memphis Slim, Count Basie, and Dinah Washington may be called "The Blues," but they are so exuberantly painted (most with backgrounds of an insistent shade of sunshine yellow) that the show's spirit is much closer to "Is Everybody Happy?" Through Oct. 14. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Jiří Georg Dokoupil—This is an extremely intelligent, entertaining, and versatile artist whose work appears in different guises at every show. This time, he has made paintings out of soot, using a candle as if it were a brush. The effect suggests the pointillism of Chuck Close, as well as the Germans Polke and Richter, but this is not Dokoupil's most visually appealing work. The idea, however, of depicting the Christie's and Sotheby's salesrooms (among other things) in so dire and Dickensian a fashion simply can't be beat. Through Oct. 21. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. . . . ¶ Kasmin, 580 Broadway, has a show of recent drawings.)

Paul Laffoley—These paintings, by a Boston-based artist, look like exalted, cosmic-ideological Parcheesi boards. Looking at them, one feels as if one is doing time with an obsessive perpetual graduate student who has a dissertation to grind. Through Oct. 7. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

Robert Mangold—A stunning selection of paintings from the sixties and seventies that reveals the artist's debt to Ellsworth Kelly, as well as Mangold's great skill at making the seemingly rational look princely. Through Oct. 7. (Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Arnold Mesches / Ana Mendieta (1948-85)—This Californian makes bravura paintings in overheated, acidic colors and fiery slashes of acrylic. Most incorporate huge crystal chandeliers, hovering like monstrous guardian angels. / Mendieta's most poignant works were private rituals and inaccessible earthworks, created in her native Cuba, that looked like feminized fossils; some are represented here by photographs and prints. There are also modest and beautiful drawings of similar figurative forms etched or painted onto large, brittle leaves. Through Oct. 21. (Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St.)

Richard Serra—With three new steel prop pieces the master of monumental moxie displays a much greater diversity of expression than he is usually credited with. One of them, a vertical beam supporting a vast horizontal that runs from wall to wall, brings new meaning to the ancient architectural challenge of the post and lintel. Through Oct. 14. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.) . . . ¶ Each of Serra's newest black oil stick drawings—by far his most sculptural—depicts two propped forms. With titles such as "The United States Government Deprives Artists of Moral Rights," they signal a political motivation to works that seem to be purely abstract, and are a reminder that "Tilted Arc," even before the controversy, was a political statement. Through Oct. 14. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Jacques Villeglé—These collages, made of torn and layered posters gathered from Parisian streets, have a muscular, proto-graffiti appeal, as if they were fragments ripped from construction sites. The work has the structural spine of early modernist collage and a strong dose of sixties street anarchy, not to mention a dash of the playful conceits of the artist's better-known contemporaries Klein, Tinguely, Arman, and Spoerri. Through Oct. 17. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Philip Wofford—This artist's work is brilliantly colored, variously and thickly painted, abstract-hysterical, and desperately in need of a pause and a breath of air. Through Oct. 14. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Group Show—An exhibit that conveys the splendid spirit of Milan in the fifties with only partial success. Lucio Fontana (1899-1968) is represented by some of his more decoratively colored and slashed *concetto spaziale* paintings and some fine, modestly poetic pierced drawings; Enrico Baj by some violently brushy childlike paintings of children; and Piero Manzoni (1933-63) by, among other work, a fresh-looking framed grid of cotton balls, a stretched, creased canvas, and the artist's most dastardly act of Dada, a can that holds true to its title, "Merde d'Artiste." Through Oct. 14. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Short List—**sue coe,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 4); **raymond han,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 11); **grégoire müller,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 28); **anne ryan,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 4); **william tucker,** McKee, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 28).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Roger Brown—New paintings. Brown's distinctive, cartoonish style never changes—it doesn't even develop—but he keeps up with current events (the Exxon spill, Elvis idolatry) and his attitude gets increasingly sour. You'd think he really had something against critics, intellectuals, Picasso, Stanley Tigerman, the class structure, people who make and sell paintings for a living, etc. Through Oct. 11. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Petah Coyne—Six spectacular sculptures—mostly of wire mesh and steel, covered with black sand—hang from the ceiling on vinelike "stems": they are visually alive and foreboding from every angle. Through Oct. 7. (Shainman, 560 Broadway. A complementary installation is in the lobby at the Brooklyn Museum.)

Lydia Dona / David Winter—Accomplished layered paintings with schematic black diagrams and thrashes of dripping paint, and with titles such as "Circuits of Liquidity and the Shadows of Desire." / A large steel-and-aluminum sculpture in an odd scale (both monumental and miniaturized) which, like Dona's paintings, recalls chemical diagrams. Through Oct. 21. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Louise Fishman—Only a few years ago, Fishman was near the forefront of a wave of solid, painterly abstract painting, but these recent dark paintings about paint are not memorable and are generally less interesting than some of the works not on view but reproduced in the catalogue. Through Nov. 4. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

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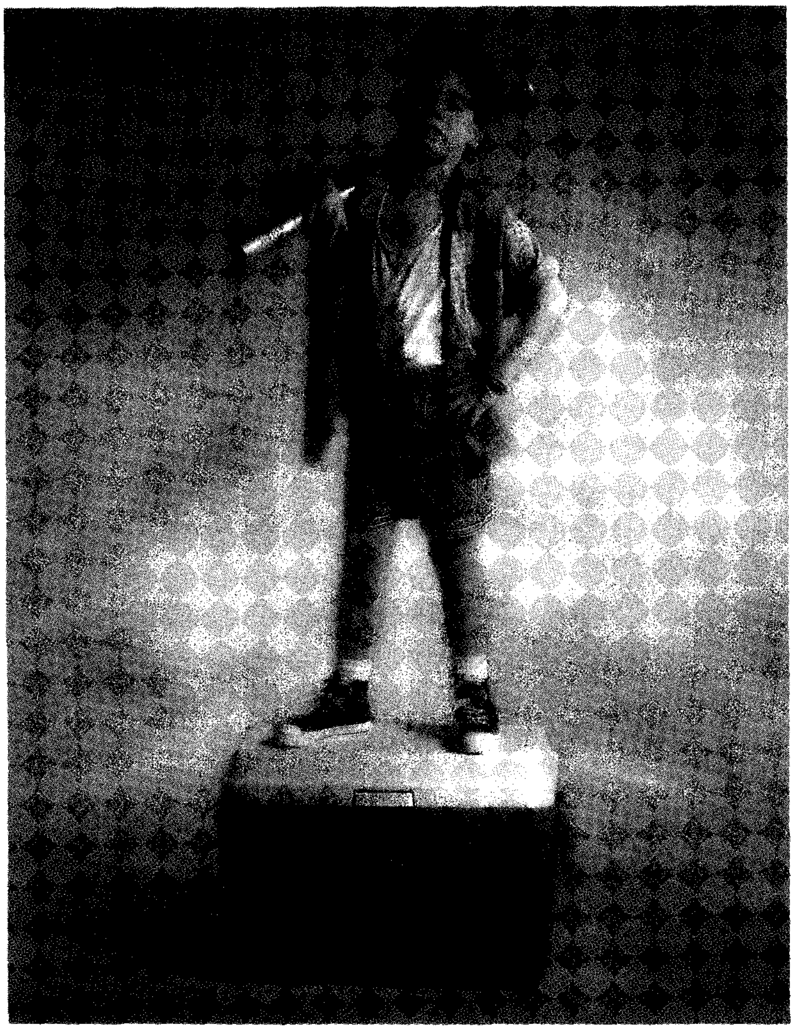

Celebrating his 10th birthday this year, Jeff gives thumbs up to playing catcher, pizza and Saturdays. Definite thumbs down: onions, being grounded.

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ART—Cont'd

William Hawkins—Recent works by a Kentucky-born artist who first started to paint in 1979, at the age of eighty-four. "Skater (Eric Heiden)" (1988; enamel paint on Masonite) is an unself-consciously sweet capsule of youth, speed, power, and winter, and the work's glowing colors and loose brush style may remind some viewers of paintings by Georg Baselitz. A warm and quite wonderful show. Through Oct. 21. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

David Ireland—Of all today's faux urban archeologists, Ireland is perhaps the most poetic. His sculptural groups, consisting of troughs, steel tubs, battered metal cabinets, wood scraps, and bare light bulbs—sometimes embedded in concrete plops—have a sense of melancholy, irony, and mannered anarchy. Through Oct. 7. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

Ronald Jones / Mike Kelley—At first, this roomful of Brancusi-like sculptures on, appropriately, polished marble and weathered wood bases looks like yet another case of textbook appropriationism, but a consideration of the complicated titles reveals the reverse and, ultimately, a biting critique of mannered aestheticism. Through Oct. 7. / A smashing set of silk scarves produced at the Fabric Workshop, in Philadelphia, and reminiscent of medieval flags, but with skulls, three-leaf clovers, a crowned penis, and testicles in odd places, like at the tips of a swastika. Through Oct. 10. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Martin Kippenberger—These psychedelic, busy collages are bawdy in image and formal conceptualization and are somewhat annoying for their narcissistic imagery and feigned subversiveness. Through Oct. 18. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Sherrie Levine—Theme: Duchamp's "Bachelors, Even." Movement: pristine-looking, hand-size frosted-glass *objets*, based on the cryptic shapes of his "Large Glass" suitors, in pretty cherry-wood cases, spotlit. Variation: Levine's already familiar paintings resembling chessboards—Duchamp's game—in the rear gallery. This show is the polished, fashionable realization of a shrewd, tight idea. Through Oct. 14. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

David Ortins—Dull paintings in wax, of stripes, Jewish stars, "I"s, balls, and intersecting lines. Through Oct. 14. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Scott Richter—Influenced equally by tribal masks and Renaissance torsos, these shields and checkerboards are remarkable for the beauty of their surfaces—especially the pieces involving pigmented beeswax or polyester resin—but are not as interestingly funky as the artist's work of a couple of years ago. Through Oct. 14. (Curt Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Jack Risley / Sylvia Kolbowski—Huge rubber-and-metal sculptures—resembling monstrous vacuum cleaners preparing to suction the earth of all living matter—are oppressive yet funny. / This glib and unprovocatively self-serving installation consists of framed reviews of a previous installation by the artist and some uninviting stools for contemplation, and makes use of a fireplace with real singed brick innards and a mantel. Through Oct. 14. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

Aldo Rossi—Rossi's studies of buildings that he has designed with a stripped-down classical vocabulary and of his melancholy, still piazzas evoke his fellow-Italians Morandi and de Chirico and exemplify the best of contemporary architectural drawings. Through Oct. 21. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Frank Schroder—Large, blunt constructions of found-wood planks and hopsacking. The works recall Gordon Matta-Clark's slices of urban abandonment, but without that artist's pathos. Through Oct. 7. (Gibson, 568 Broadway.)

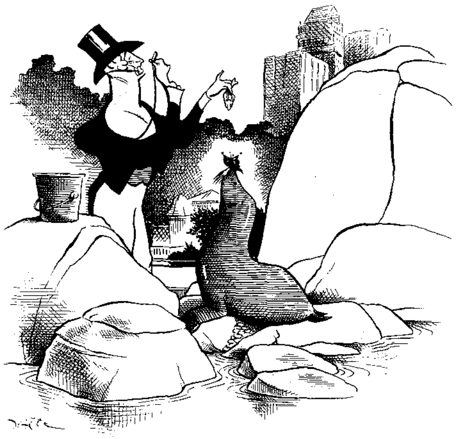
David Smith—This artist has been making paintings ("stochastic simulations") about the Vietnam War for at least eight years, and suddenly his obsessively repeated patterns evoking camouflage, bomber planes, and military decorations—once so eccentric—don't seem weird at all. There is an overfinished quality to most of this work (which will probably make it attractive to those drawn to commodity-like art), but this is a very interesting first New York solo show. Through Oct. 14. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Carol Szymanski—Four steel floor pieces and one wall structure conceived during a year spent as a resident Prix de Rome recipient. They relate to mathematical systems (the Schwartz-Cristoffel transformation, for instance), have shapes like starbursts along with gridded planes, and have to do with the categorical processes of learning. This is technically spiffy, rigorously intellectualized work that seems heartfelt but offers no sensual gratification at all. Through Oct. 14. (Loughelton, 67 Prince St.)

Ben Vautier—This French postwar neo-Dadaist has been wreaking conceptual havoc for decades with word paintings such as the recent ones on view here. There's also a wall of small works from the last twenty years where the artist's mischievous conceptual silliness is given virtually free rein. Through Oct. 21. (Harvey, 537 Broadway.)

Hannah Wilke—Titled "About Face," this trenchant and—as is always the case with this often brilliant and quite relentless artist—very personal exhibition of works in mixed mediums (watercolors, drawings, and photographs) establishes some stunning parallels between natural beauty and the ravages of age, and between states of innocence and the ever-present possibilities of sexual corruption. Key subjects include Wilke's pet lovebirds, her dying mother, and Wilke herself. Through Oct. 7. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Group Shows—At the **Protetch,** 560 Broadway: Among the several pre-season teasers here are a plastic pool of water by James O. Clark, with an illuminated black disk floating in it, that is enigmatic and oddly reassuring, and a huge new construction by Judy Pfaff—of transparent colored globes, large white steel dots, some French-curve paisleys, and lots of lacy connecting loops—that manages to be both massive and buoyant. Through Oct. 7. . . . **Sperone Westwater,** 142 Greene St.: This appealing, casual grouping consists of some great early Robert Ryman white paintings—two with residual tape marks where they were attached to the wall, and one with metronomic brushstrokes; some very pretty beeswax paintings of trapped, flickering light by Domenico Bianchi; and some oddly glitzy constructions by Richard Tuttle that are crudely painted, involve arcs of bare light bulbs, and are materialistic in a vaporous way. Through Oct. 24.



RENOWN

On McCarthy Square, which is actually a triangle bounded by Seventh Avenue South, Charles Street, and Waverly Place, there is a war memorial flagpole on a granite base inscribed "Brave Men and Worthy Patriots Dear to God and Famous to All Ages." *But if you're headed toward the square up Seventh Avenue what you see is a monument marked* "God and Famous." *It looks like a shrine to a shockingly contemporary divinity. It's not enough to be a creator in this town; you've also got to wave your flag about it.*

Short List—**Barbara Bloom,** Jay Gorney Modern Art, 100 Greene St.; **Max Coyer,** Katzen-Brown, 475 Broome St. (through Oct. 14); **Robert Gober,** Paula Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through Oct. 28); **Stephen Greene,** Marilyn Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 24); **Rona Pondick,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Oct. 28); **Jan Sawka,** Dorsky, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 28); **Krzysztof Wodiczko,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 28); **Rob Wynne,** 112 Greene Street Gallery (through Oct. 21); **Tino Zago,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway (through Oct. 7).

OTHER GALLERIES

Reverend Howard Finster—According to one of this exhibition's very informative wall labels, "In 1976, at the age of 60, Reverend Howard Finster was divinely inspired to pick up a paintbrush and a can of Fixal tractor enamel to 'paint sacred art' "; fortunately, the Reverend is still delivering his wacky fire-and-brimstone painted sermons in rapid-fire succession. This retrospective of sorts contains a healthy dose of the eleven thousand-plus works he has created, including igloo-like high rises with diligent prayers in niches, and a rainstorm of books of knowledge, and with titles like "Self Portrait—My Brain Is Like a Wirehouse." Some are quite beautifully painted. Through Jan. 5. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. Mondays through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

Maura Sheehan—Sheehan is practically the only artist keeping installation art alive in the object-obsessed New York gallery scene. Her current environment is a rumination on religion and violence in America called "Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion." The show is spooky and affecting, and includes many black statues of Christian saints wearing sinister masks, and a row of books burned beyond identification. Through Oct. 14. (Watson, 241 Lafayette St.)

Andy Warhol (1930–87)—Warhol's flowers, with their dime-store blooms set against jungle-thick-grass backgrounds, are both saccharine and sinister, and remain among his oddest, most delusive images. This spare installation includes flower paintings and prints in six different sizes (from five to a hundred and fifteen inches). Through Oct. 14. (Baghoomian, 611 Broadway.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

A NEW place to go and see photographs is a happy addition to the city—and one with substantial space is especially welcome. We paid our first visit to the just opened midtown branch of the International Center of Photography on the first crisp day of fall, and the light inside seemed as clean and sparkling as it was out on the avenue.

Alexander Liberman's portraits of artists, often taken in their studios, kick off the abundance, and this exhibition is itself plentiful. Here, among others, are Helen Frankenthaler and Barnett Newman dancing on the construction site of the 1964 World's Fair, Marcel Duchamp playing chess, André Masson looking as if he were about to get shot, and Jasper Johns in front of one of his flag paintings, grinning as if he'd swallowed a canary. Our favorite is a portrait of Giacometti at work. Between two of his long fingers is a burning cigarette, and you get the feeling that his hand could catch fire, because his concentration on the evolving sculpture seems so unbreakable.

Barbara Kasten's big, architecturally involved prints fill the next two galleries. Her work is zippy, but beyond all the flamboyant colors and sharp shapes, it's meaningless. Meaning dissipates in the next rooms, too, but

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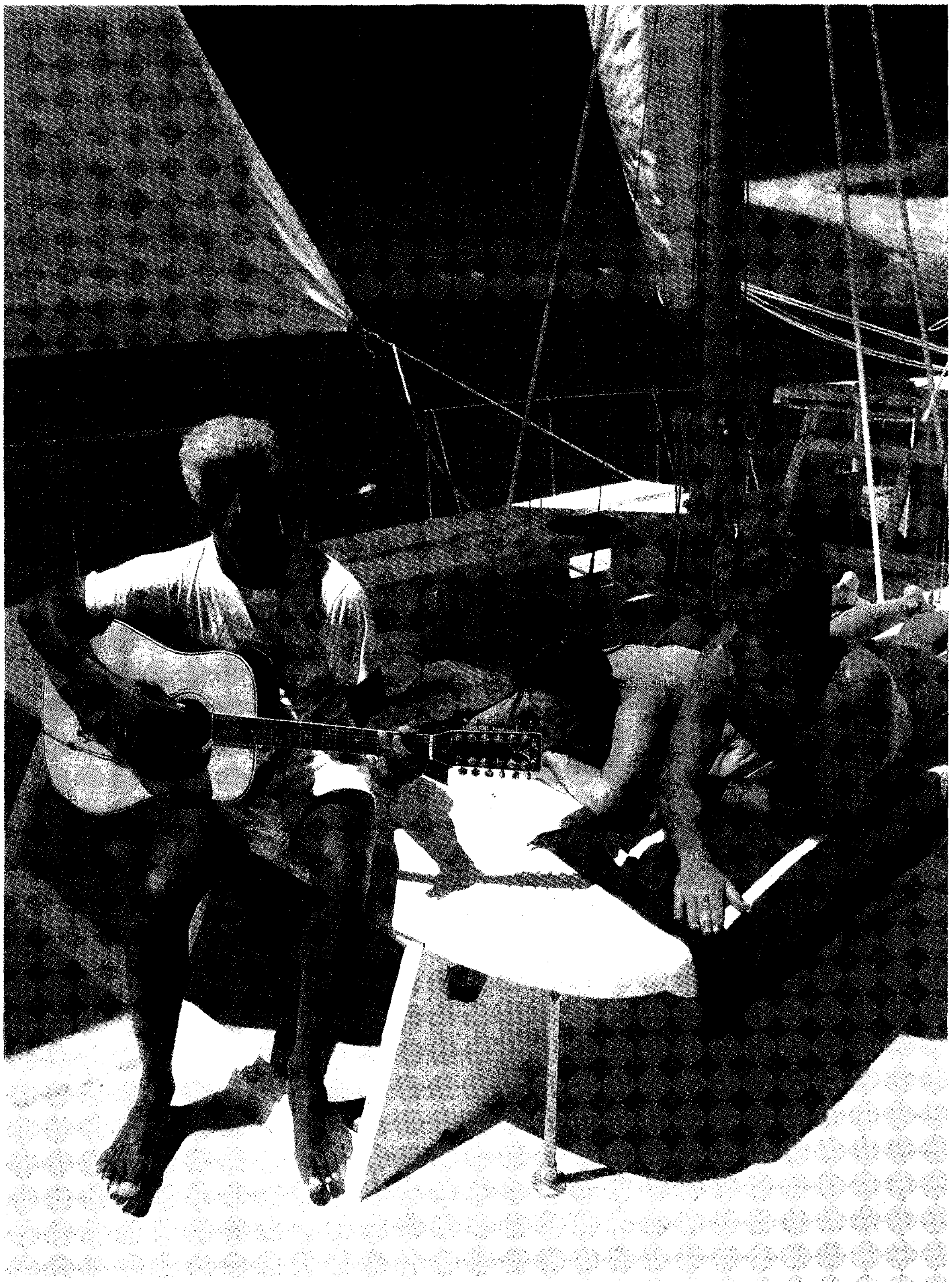


CAYMAN ISLANDS

"Those who know us, love us."

for a different reason. Here, James Nachtwey's images of war, tragedy, and violence are relentlessly brutal, showing human life being blasted and blown up as if it were powder. No question Nachtwey's got a strong stomach. The question, as always with this kind of photojournalism, is: humanism or voyeurism?

The last rooms are filled with an assortment of classics from the I.C.P.'s permanent collection, and a tiny selection of Berenice Abbott's work, including many of her bright-lights, big-city shots of New York. On our way out, we heard Bach coming from a screening room that is running a half-hour "interactive video disc" by Juan Downey.

Aaron Siskind—No one can defend the importance of form in photography better than John Szarkowski, and few photographers can illustrate Szarkowski's words as well as Aaron Siskind. Szarkowski's selection of Siskind's prints from those owned by the Museum of Modern Art is a treat. Even though many of Siskind's photographs on view here could mingle among a very refined gathering of abstract paintings, they don't betray their roots, and never let you forget where they came from—a camera that framed what was already there. Through Oct. 10. (Museum of Modern Art.)

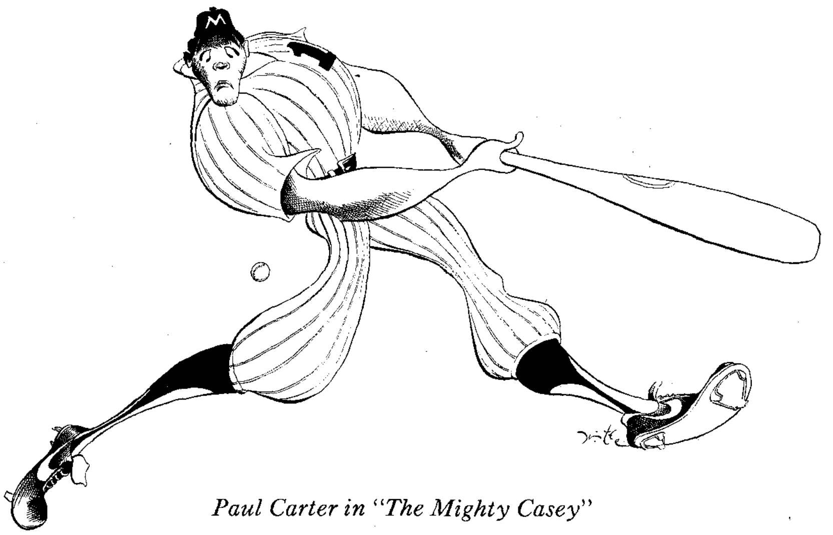
Jeff Wall—Ambitious work that's subtle enough and advertisement-slick enough to be free of the didacticism that all too often undermines art with a message. All five of Wall's light-box photographs on view here are hypnotic, multilevelled, and sharp-eyed. The individuals in them look happened-upon but are actually actors hired by Wall to portray "real life." Fear, racial tension, and hardship are some of the realities he wants to represent, and he sure does. Through Oct. 7. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

International Center of Photography—"Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America," a show of works by photojournalist Brian Lanker. . . . ¶ Dorit Cypis has assembled an installation, called "The Naked Nude," in which viewers are surrounded by seven slide projectors. Both shows through Oct. 29. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—Three exhibitions of works by individual artists, plus two of works from the I.C.P.'s permanent collection, fill this new space, which comprises two floors and twelve thousand square feet. Through Nov. 1. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

The Donnelley Collection—More than forty contemporary photographs from a collection that includes works by Bruce Nauman, Cindy Sherman, and Richard Prince. Through Oct. 7. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Short List—**berenice abbott,** New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (starts Oct. 7); **lewis baltz,** Lorence-Monk, 568 Broadway, and Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 14); **stephen brigidi,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Oct. 21); **pol bury,** Prakapas, 19 E. 71st St. (opens at noon, through Oct. 28); **lynn davis,** Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (through Nov. 4); **macduff everton,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 28); **david finn,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 14); **kathy grove** and **carl toth,** Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 14); **andreas gursky,** 303 Gallery, 127 Spring St. (through Oct. 14); **timothy hursley,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway (through Oct. 7); **andré kertész,** Twining, 568 Broadway (through Oct. 14); **jaschi klein,** Pfeifer, 568 Broadway (through Oct. 12); **mitchell syrop,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Oct. 7); **boyd webb,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 14); **weegee,** Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. (through Oct. 28).



Paul Carter in "The Mighty Casey"

MUSIC

A GOOD argument could be made for the proposition that the string quartet has flourished more than any of the other classical genres in the twentieth century. Béla Bartók's six essays changed the way the world hears stringed instruments; both of Elliott Carter's Pulitzers were won for quartets; and Ives, Janáček, Schoenberg, Tippett, and Britten have made important, lasting statements in the form. This seems right. The string quartet has always been understood as a vehicle for private thought, for undecorated essentials, for communication with the few.

Dmitri Shostakovich was able to express some of his important thoughts in public, but as his inner mourning and pessimism grew, in the second half of his career, the string quartet gradually became his preferred form of composition. He completed the first in his cycle of fifteen works in 1938, when he was already past thirty and past the harrowing trauma of Stalin's denunciation of his "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District"; seven of the fifteen quartets come from the last eleven years of his life. Some musicians consider this cycle Shostakovich's most satisfying body of work; some consider it, perhaps alongside Bartók's, the most important twentieth-century series of quartets. The Manhattan String Quartet has begun a Town Hall traversal of the complete cycle; the remaining installments are set for October 2, 16, and 23, and November 13.

It is a good week for hearing twentieth-century quartet music. Ernest Bloch's Fifth will be played at the Metropolitan Museum on October 7, and on October 10 comes the world première of George Perle's Eighth, called "Windows of Order," played by the Juilliard String Quartet, in the Juilliard Theatre. Mr. Perle's lucid construction and intellectual probity have to an unusual degree won the allegiance of partisans on all sides of the fractious contemporary music scene, and though his excellence cannot be called typical he is himself a typical son of his times in his particular affinity for the string quartet.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**aida,** with Aprile Millo, Dolora Zajick, Placido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes; James Levine conducting. (Oct. 2 at 8 and Oct. 7 at 1:30.). . . With Aprile Millo, Stefania Toczyska, Nicola Martinucci, and Juan Pons; Christian Badea. (Oct. 11 at 8.) . . . **porgy and bess,** with Myra Merritt, Marvis Martin, Karen Williams, Andrew Smith, and Charles Williams; Robert Duerr. (Oct. 3 at 8.) . . . With Myra Merritt, Marvis Martin, Camellia Johnson, Andrew Smith, and Charles Williams; Robert Duerr. (Oct. 6 at 8.) . . . With Priscilla Baskerville, Marvis Martin, Camellia Johnson, Michael Smartt, and Ben Holt; James Levine. (Oct. 9 at 8.) . . . **la bohème,** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Sona Ghazarian, Richard Leech, and Brian Schexnayder; Donato Renzetti. (Oct. 4 at 8 and Oct. 7 at 8:30.) . . . **il trittico,** consisting of three short operas—"Il Tabarro," with Teresa Stratas, Giorgio Merighi, and Juan Pons; "Suor Angelica," with Teresa Stratas, Florence Quivar, and Joyce Guyer; and "Gianni Schicchi," with Teresa Stratas, Bruno Pola, and Vinson Cole. James Levine conducting. (Oct. 5 at 8; and Oct. 10 at 8, when Placido Domingo will perform in "Il Tabarro," and Juan Pons will perform in "Gianni Schicchi.")

New York City Opera—The opera's orchestra is on strike. (For updated information about performances and the exchange or refund of tickets, call 870-5570.)

American Chamber Opera Company—Presenting "The Mighty Casey," an opera by William Schuman based on E. L. Thayer's poem about baseball in Mudville. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. 517-0475. Oct. 6-7 at 8. Through Oct. 14.)

ORCHESTRAS

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall: Zubin Mehta conducting symphonies by Mozart and Mahler. (Oct. 3 at 7:30.) . . . ¶ Helmuth Rilling conducting Bach's B-Minor Mass. With Sylvia McNair, soprano; Marjana Lipovsek and Cornelia Kallisch, mezzo-sopranos (alternating); Howard Crook, tenor; Mark Pedrotti, bass; and the Gächinger Kantorei. (Oct. 5 at 8, Oct. 6 at 2, and Oct. 7 and Oct. 10 at 8.)

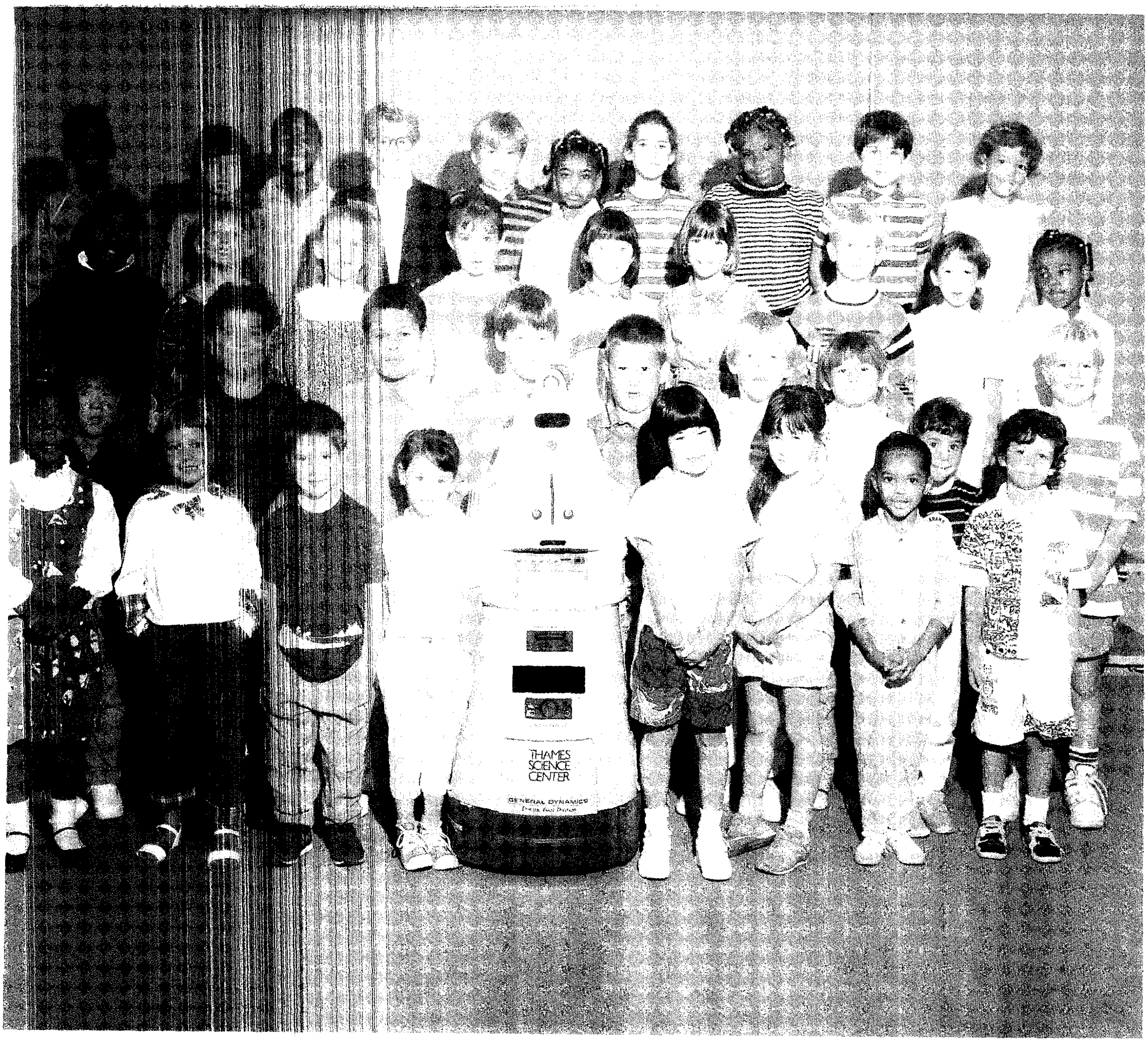
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra—Zdenek Macal conducting a program of works by Zwilich, Saint-Saëns, and Berlioz. With Lynn Harrell, cello. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 7 at 8.)

San Francisco Symphony—Herbert Blomstedt conducting. With Cho-Liang Lin, violin. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 10 at 8.) . . . ¶ With Vladimir Feltsman, piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Boston Symphony Orchestra—Seiji Ozawa conducting Mahler's Ninth Symphony. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 11-12 at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Otto-Werner Mueller conducting. With Allison Eldredge, cello. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 4 at 8.)

New England Bach Festival—Blanche Honegger Moyse conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Blanche Moyse Chorale. With Henri-



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ette Schellenberg, soprano; Mary Westbrook-Geha, mezzo-soprano; Jon Humphrey, tenor; and Sanford Sylvan, baritone. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 6 at 8.)

RECITALS

Shostakovich String Quartets—The second in a series of four concerts by the Manhattan String Quartet. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 2 at 8.)

Boston Camerata—Joel Cohen conducting an original-instruments concert called "Musicque de Joye." With the Boston Shawm and Sackbut Ensemble. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 5 at 8.)

Richard Stoltzman—Clarinet. Appearing with Judy Collins. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 6 at 8.)

Myung Hui Kim and Sang Kyun Choi—Soprano and baritone, in a program of works by Mendelssohn, Poulenc, Schubert, and Bernstein. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 7 at 8.)

Portland String Quartet—In a program of works by Bloch, Ravel, and Beethoven. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 7 at 8.)

Alexander Schneider—Violin. With Isadore Cohen, violin and viola; Michael Tree, viola; and Julius Levine, bass. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Oct. 8 at 2. For information about tickets, call 741-5689.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Performing George Perle's "Windows of Order." (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Oct. 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-7515.)

Young Uck Kim and Peter Serkin—Playing violin and piano in the first of a three-concert series of all the Beethoven violin sonatas. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Oct. 11 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

3 Girls 3—A reunion concert, of sorts, of the swing-era stunners Helen O'Connell (who sang with Tommy Dorsey), Kay Starr (who sang with Bing Crosby, Glenn Miller, and Count Basie), and Margaret Whiting (of "Moonlight in Vermont" fame). They will perform separately and then, at the end, together. (Criterion Cabaret, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8, and Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 3. Through Oct. 15.)

Elton John—Unfortunately, Elton's new album, "Sleeping with the Past," isn't a return to the pop brilliance of his mid-seventies recordings (the new single, "Healing Hands," could be turned into a jingle for Jergens lotion). Although the album is impeccably arranged and sung with great enthusiasm, it lacks the immediacy of his best work. In concert, he's an energetic entertainer, pounding the keyboards night after night and cheerleading some terrific rock-and-roll songs. But the real power of an Elton John performance is found in the ballads. The very best of them, like "Daniel," are sung in low, conversational tones, and his voice, confiding and vulnerable, reaches out to the audience, full of the promise of friendship and allegiance. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Oct. 3-4 and Oct. 6-7, all at 8.)

Public Image Ltd.—Here's Johnny! . . . again. After the breakup of the Sex Pistols, John Lydon's first band (which has become, in his words, "a piece of cozy little nostalgia"), he formed PiL. Their sound—funky, industrial-strength metal music with a hammer-and-anvil backbeat—is beautifully brutal. And Lydon possesses a comic sneer worthy of Richard III. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Yomo Toro—American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. Oct. 4 at 7:30. There is no charge beyond museum admission.

Stéphane Grappelli—With Yo-Yo Ma, Roger Kellaway, and David Grisman. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 4 at 8.)

Big Audio Dynamite—Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 947-5850. Oct. 4-5 at 8.

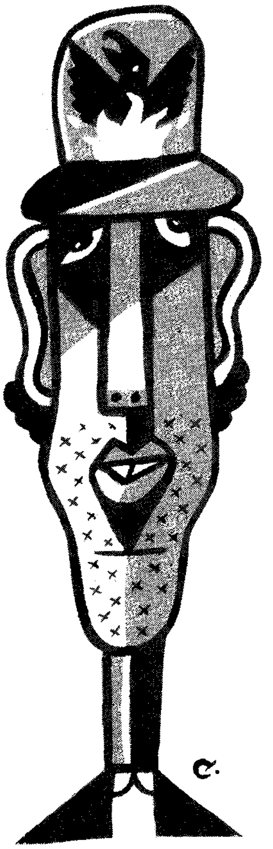
K. T. Oslin—With Clint Black. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 5 at 8.)

Judy Carmichael—With a trio. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 979-5850. Oct. 5 at 8.)

Cris Williamson and Teresa Trull—With Ferron. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 5 at 8.)

"Highlights in Jazz"—The first concert in this series features Louis Bellson, Jay Leonhart, John Bunch, Ted Nash, Jr., and Hank Jones. (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. S. and LaGuardia Pl. Oct. 5 at 8. For information about tickets, call 998-4949.)

Pat Metheny Group—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 5-6 at 8.



Mick Jones of Big Audio Dynamite

Music and Dance from West Java—With puppets. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 6 at 8.)

John Zorn—Roulette, 228 West Broadway. Oct. 8-9 at 9. For information about tickets, call 219-8242.

Gordon Lightfoot—Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Oct. 8 at 8.

Soca Festival—With Sparrow, Arrow, Baron, and other soul-calypso stars. (Palladium. Oct. 8 at 10.)

Elena Ledda and Sonos—Symphony Space. Oct. 9 at 8.

Rolling Stones—Shea Stadium. 307-7171. Oct. 10 at 7.

Bob Dylan—Beacon Theatre. Oct. 10-13 at 8.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Vs. the Los Angeles Raiders, Oct. 9 at 9.

Rangers—Vs. the Calgary Flames, Oct. 11 at 7:30.

(The Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands; for information about tickets, call 421-6600. The Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300.)

CHAMPIONSHIPS—BASEBALL

Playoffs—The American League playoffs start on Oct. 3, and the National League playoffs on Oct. 4.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

New York Armory Antiques Show—On display at this annual sale and exhibition, now in its twelfth year at the 7th Regiment Armory, will be the usual silver, rugs, and furniture, as well as rare books, weathervanes, and music boxes. (Park Ave. at 66th St. Oct. 4, from 4 to 9; Oct. 5-7, from noon to 9; and Oct. 8, from noon to 6.)

Talks—A panel of Chinese students, artists, and writers and American China scholars talk about human rights since Tiananmen. Moderating the event will be Orville Schell; Arthur Miller will introduce. (The Columns, 584 Broadway, between Prince and Houston Sts. Oct. 4 at 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Carolyn Heilbrun, author of "Writing a Woman's Life," and, as Amanda Cross, of many mystery books, will give a lecture on the artistic concerns of women. (Pen and Brush Club, 16 E. 10th St. Oct. 5 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Readings—Oct. 6 at 8: James Gleick and Stephen Jay Gould. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 63rd St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 8: Bharati Mukherjee. . . . Oct. 11 at 8: Paul Fussell. (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 8: Italian poets, including Patrizia Cavalli and Valerio Magrelli, and their translators, including Dana Gioia and Jonathan Galassi, reading in Italian and in English. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door.)

Illustrations on the Block—An auction of about two hundred paintings and drawings, including a cover illustration for a 1928 *Saturday Evening Post* by Norman Rockwell. (Illustration House, 96 Spring Street. Oct. 7 at 2. Previews are daily until then.)

Memoranda—Yom Kippur starts at sundown on Oct. 8. . . . ¶ Columbus Day is Oct. 9.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 28.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
- Theatre 1: "The Navigator: An Odyssey Across Time" (directed by Vincent Ward).
- Theatre 2: "Shirley Valentine" (†).
- Theatre 3: "Emma's Shadow" (Soeren Kragh-Jacobsen; in Danish).
- Theatre 4: "Shell Shock" (Yoel Sharon).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
- Oct. 3-5: "Dollar" (1938, Gustaf Molander; *in Swedish), with Ingrid Bergman and* Georg Rydeberg; and "The Count of the Old Town" (1934, Sigurd Wallén and Edvin Adolphson; in Swedish), with Bergman.
- From Oct. 6: "Pierrot le Fou" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo. (Closed Mondays.)

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
- Theatre 1: "In Country" (Norman Jewison), with Bruce Willis, Emily Lloyd, Joan Allen, Kevin Anderson, and Judith Ivey.
- Theatre 2: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.
- Theatre 3: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 13th and 14th. (505-7320)
- "Sea of Love" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
- Through Oct. 5: "Dead Poets Society" (†).
- From Oct. 6: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
- "Sea of Love" (†).

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
- Through Oct. 3: "On the Make" (Samuel Hurwitz).
- From Oct. 4: Theatre temporarily closed.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
- Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
- Theatre 2: "Shirley Valentine" (†).
- Theatre 3: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
- "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson, JoBeth Williams, Sam Waterston, and Brian Keith.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
- "On the Make" (Samuel Hurwitz).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
- Through Oct. 5: "Penn & Teller Get Killed" (†).
- From Oct. 6: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
- Through Oct. 5: "The Abyss" (†).
- From Oct. 6 (tentative): "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
- "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
- Theatre 1: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson, JoBeth Williams, and Sam Waterston.
- *Theatre 2: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes),* with John Candy and Amy Madigan.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
- "The Big Picture" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
- Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
- Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
- Theatre 1: "In Country" (Norman Jewison), with Bruce Willis, Emily Lloyd, Joan Allen, Kevin Anderson, and Judith Ivey.
- Theatre 2: "The Girl on a Swing" (Gordon Hessler), with Meg Tilly and Rupert Frazer.
- Theatre 3: "Batman" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
- Theatre 1: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.
- Theatre 2: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
- Through Oct. 5: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
- From Oct. 6: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
- Theatre 1: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.
- Theatre 2: "A Dry White Season" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
- "Queen of Hearts" (Jon Amiel).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
- "Shirley Valentine" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
- "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
- Theatre 1: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.
- Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
- Theatre 1: Through Oct. 5: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon. From Oct. 6: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham.
- Theatre 2: Through Oct. 5: "On the Make" (Samuel Hurwitz). From Oct. 6: To be announced.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
- Theatre 1: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (directed by Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura, Fernando Guillén, and Julieta Serrano.
- Theatre 2: Through Oct. 5: "Chocolat" (Claire Denis, in French), with Guilia Boschi and Isaach de Bankolé. From Oct. 6: "The Music Teacher" (Gérard Corgiau; *in French).*

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
- Theatre 1: Through Oct. 5: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†). From Oct. 6: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.
- Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
- "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
- Theatre 1: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson, JoBeth Williams, Sam Waterston, and Brian Keith.
- Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
- Theatre 1: "The Second Animation Celebration: The Movie," twenty-four short films from six countries.
- Theatre 2: "The Girl on a Swing" (Gordon Hessler), with Meg Tilly and Rupert Frazer.
- Theatre 3: "Heavy Petting" (Obie Benz).
- Theatre 4: "Spices" (Ketan Mehta; in Hindi), with Smita Patil.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
- Theatre 1: "Sea of Love" (†).
- Theatre 2: "In Country" (Norman Jewison), with Bruce Willis, Emily Lloyd, Joan Allen, Kevin Anderson, and Judith Ivey.
- Theatre 3: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.
- Theatre 4: "Parenthood" (†).
- Theatre 5: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
- Theatre 6: "Sea of Love" (†).
- Theatre 7: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson, JoBeth Williams, Sam Waterston, and Brian Keith.
- Theatre 8: "A Dry White Season" (†).
- Theatre 9: Through Oct. 5: "The Abyss" (†). From Oct. 6: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0600)
- Theatre 1: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.
- Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
- Theatre 3: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy, Amy Madigan, Jean Kelly, Gaby Hoffman, and Macaulay Culkin.

Worldwide Cinemas, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
- Theatre 1: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson, JoBeth Williams, Sam Waterston, and Brian Keith.
- Theatre 2: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
- Theatre 3: "Parenthood" (†).
- Theatre 4: "The Abyss" (†).
- Theatre 5: Through Oct. 5: "Do the Right Thing" (†). From Oct. 6: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.
- Theatre 6: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy, Amy Madigan, Jean Kelly, Gaby Hoffman, and Macaulay Culkin.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
- "Dead Poets Society" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
- "Sea of Love" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
- "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
- "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (Charlotte Zwerin), a documentary.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
- Through Oct. 5: "Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia.
- From Oct. 6: "Drugstore Cowboy" (Gun Van Sant, Jr.), with Matt Dillon and Kelly Lynch.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
- "Weapons of the Spirit" (Pierre Sauvage), a documentary.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
- "Tom Jones" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
- (Matinées only) "The Adventures of Milo and Otis" (Masanori Hata); and (evenings only) "Do the Right Thing" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
- "Shirley Valentine" (†).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
- Theatre 1: "High Fidelity—The Adventures *of the* Guarneri String Quartet" (Allan Miller), a documentary.
- Theatre 2: "The Little Thief" (†).
- Theatre 3: Through Oct. 5: "The Music Teacher" (Gérard Corbiau; in French). From Oct. 6: "Yaaba" (Idrissa Ouedraogo; in Moore).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
- Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
- Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
- "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
- Theatre 1: "A Dry White Season" (†).
- Theatre 2: "In Country" (Norman Jewison), with Bruce Willis, Emily Lloyd, Joan Allen, Kevin Anderson, and Judith Ivey.
- Theatre 3: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.
- Theatre 4: Through Oct. 5: "Black Rain." From Oct. 6: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham.
- Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).
- Theatre 6: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
- Theatre 1: Through Oct. 5: "Parenthood" (†). From Oct. 6: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.
- Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

Columbia Cinema, B'way at 103rd. (316-6600)
- Through Oct. 5: "Batman" (†).
- From Oct. 6 (tentative): "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
- Theatre 1: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.
- Theatre 2: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson, JoBeth

Williams, Sam Waterston, and Brian Keith.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).

Theatre 2: "Johnny Handsome" (directed by Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Theatre 3: "Kickboxer" (Mark DiSalle and David Worth).

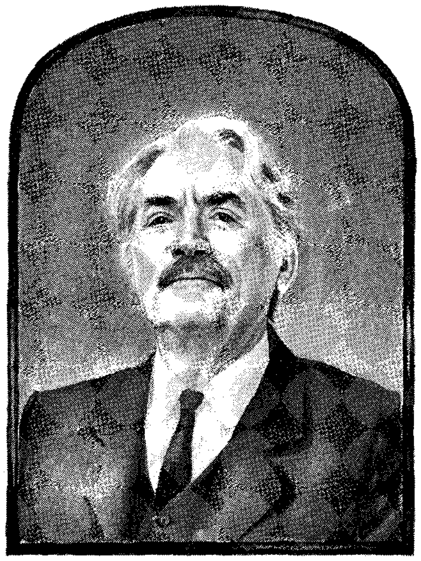
Theatre 4: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.

Theatre 5: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone, Donald Sutherland, John Amos, Darlanne Fluegel, and Sonny Landham.

Theatre 6: "On the Make" (Samuel Hurwitz).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

Through Oct. 5: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, Dennis Franz, and John Heard.



From Oct. 6: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†); and "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy.

Theatre 3: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks; and "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).

Theatre 4: Through Oct. 5: "The Heart of Dixie" (Martin Davidson), with Ally Sheedy, Virginia Madsen, Phoebe Cates, Treat Williams, and Don Michael Paul. From Oct. 6: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 5: "Parenthood" (†). From Oct. 6: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.

Theatre 2: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson, JoBeth Williams, Sam Waterston, and Brian Keith.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

"Casualties of War" (†).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Theatre 2: "In Country" (Norman Jewison), with Bruce Willis, Emily Lloyd, Joan Allen, Kevin Anderson, and Judith Ivey.

REVIVAL HOUSES

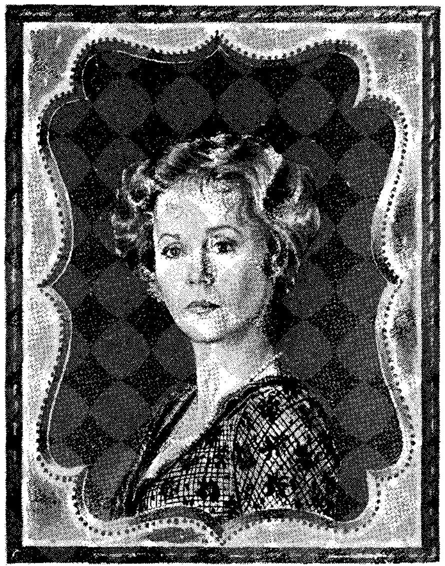
Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Oct. 2: "Butterfield 8" (1960, directed by Daniel Mann), with Elizabeth Taylor, Laurence Harvey, Eddie Fisher, and Dina Merrill; and "I'll Cry Tomorrow" (1956, Mann), with Susan Hayward, Richard Conte, and Eddie Albert.

Oct. 3-4: "Three Daring Daughters" (1948, Fred M. Wilcox), with Jeanette MacDonald, José Iturbi, and Jane Powell; and "It Happened in Brooklyn" (1947, Richard Whorf), with Frank Sinatra, Kathryn Grayson, Peter Lawford, and Jimmy Durante.

Oct. 5: "Somebody Up There Likes Me" (1956, Robert Wise), with Paul Newman, Pier Angeli, Everett Sloane, Sal Mineo, and Eileen Heckart; and "The Subject Was Roses" (1968, Ulu Grosbard), with Patricia Neal, Jack Albertson, and Martin Sheen.

Oct. 6-7: "Swing Time" (1936, George Stevens), with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Helen Broderick, Victor Moore, and Betty Furness; and "Broadway Melody of 1940" (Norman Taurog), with Astaire, Eleanor Powell, and George Murphy.



Gregory Peck, Jane Fonda, and Jimmy Smits in "Old Gringo"

Oct. 8-9: "Humoresque" (1946, Jean Negulesco), with Joan Crawford and John Garfield; and "Deception" (1946, Irving Rapper), with Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, and Claude Rains.

Oct. 10-11: "Madame Satan" (†); and "Dinner at Eight" (1933, George Cukor), with Jean Harlow, Marie Dressler, and John Barrymore.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Oct. 3: "Miss Firecracker" (1989, Thomas Schlamme), with Holly Hunter, Mary Steenburgen, Tim Robbins, Scott Glenn, and Alfre Woodard; and "Raising Arizona" (1987, Joel Coen), with Nicolas Cage and Hunter.

Oct. 4-5: "Some Like It Hot" (1959, Billy Wilder), with Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, and Jack Lemmon; and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (1953, Howard Hawks), with Jane Russell and Monroe.

Oct. 6-7: "Dead Ringers" (1988, David Cronenberg), with Jeremy Irons and Geneviève Bujold; and "Sisters" (†).

Oct. 8: "La Nuit de Varennes" (1981, Ettore Scola; in French), with Harvey Keitel, Marcello Mastroianni, Jean-Louis Barrault, and Hanna Schygulla; and "A Drama of Jealousy" (1970, Scola; in Italian), with Mastroianni and Monica Vitti.

Oct. 9-10: "Imagine" (1988, Andrew Solt), a documentary; and "Yellow Submarine" (1968, George Dunning), a full-length animated cartoon of the Beatles.

From Oct. 11: "Virgin Machine" (1989, Monika Treut; in German), with Ina Blum; and "She Must Be Seeing Things" (1988, Sheila McLaughlin), with Sheila Dabney.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through Oct. 3: "Atlantic City" (1981, Louis Malle), with Burt Lancaster, Susan Sarandon, and Kate Reid; "Nobody Lives Forever" (1946, Jean Negulesco), with John Garfield, Geraldine Fitzgerald, and Walter Brennan; and "Kansas City Confidential" (1952, Phil Karlson), with John Payne, and Preston Foster.

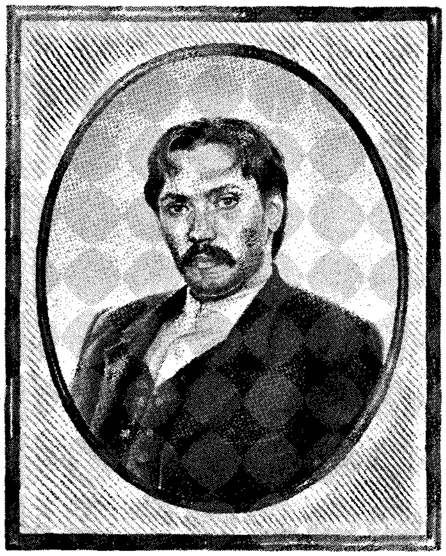
Oct. 4-5: "The Pearl" (1948, Emilio Fernandez), with Maria Elena Marques and Pedro Armendariz; "Nazarin" (1958, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal; and "Simon of the Desert" (1965, Buñuel; in Spanish), with Claudio Brook and Silvia Pinal.

Oct. 6-7: "The Tenant" (1976, Roman Polanski), with Polanski; and "Don't Look Now" (1973, Nicolas Roeg), with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland.

Oct. 8: "The Green Room" (1979, François Truffaut; in French), with Truffaut, Nathalie Baye, and Jean Dasté; and "Daisy Miller" (1974, Peter Bogdanovich), with Cybill Shepherd.

Oct. 9-10: "The Reckless Moment" (1949, Max Ophuls), with James Mason and Joan Bennett; "Fallen Angel" (1945, Otto Preminger), with Alice Faye, Dana Andrews, and Linda Darnell; and "Each Dawn I Die" (†).

From Oct. 11: "Unfaithfully Yours" (1948, Preston Sturges), with Rex Harrison, Linda Darnell, and Barbara Lawrence; and "A Letter to Three Wives" (†).



Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Oct. 2: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti, and Léa Massari; and "L'Amore" (1948, Robert Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani.

Oct. 3: "Three Strangers" (1946, Jean Negulesco), with Geraldine Fitzgerald, Peter Lorre, and Sydney Greenstreet; and "The Mask of Dimitrius" (1944, Negulesco), with Zachary Scott, Lorre, Faye Emerson, and Greenstreet.

Oct. 4: "Tarnished Lady" (1931, George Cukor), with Tallulah Bankhead and Clive Brook; and "A Royal Scandal" (1945, Otto Preminger), with Bankhead, Charles Coburn, Anne Baxter, William Eythe, Vincent Price, and Sig Rumann.

Oct. 5: "The Goddess" (1958, John Cromwell), with Kim Stanley, Lloyd Bridges, and Steven Hill; and "Ladies of the Chorus" (1949, Phil Karlson), with Adele Jergens and Marilyn Monroe.

Oct. 6-7: "Foreign Correspondent" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Joel McCrea, Laraine Day, and George Sanders; and "Saboteur" (1942, Hitchcock), with Priscilla Lane, Robert Cummings, and Otto Kruger.

Oct. 8: "North by Northwest" (1959, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Leo G. Carroll, and Martin Landau; and "The Paradine Case" (1947, Hitchcock), with Alida Valli, Gregory Peck, Charles Laughton, and Ann Todd.

Oct. 9: "Alphaville" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, and Akim Tamiroff; and "Le Gai Savoir" (1968, Godard; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.

Oct. 10: "Metropolis" (1926, Fritz Lang; silent), with Brigitte Helm; and "Spies" (1929, Lang).

Oct. 11: "In a Lonely Place" (1950, Nicholas Ray), with Humphrey Bogart and Gloria Grahame; and "Dead Reckoning" (1947, John Cromwell), with Bogart and Lizabeth Scott.

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If pain or discomfort occurs:

- at rest, or even during sleep
- at varying levels of exertion
- at specific times of the day, usually upon waking
- upon exposure to cold temperatures
- under emotional stress

It may actually be mixed angina.

Thousands of people are diagnosed every year for mixed angina—a medical problem of the heart that requires the attention of your doctor. Often the pain resembles simple heartburn, or shortness of breath, yet the consequences are not so simple. Do your heart, yourself, and your family a favor. See your doctor.

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)
THEATRE 1: Oct. 3 at 2:30: "The General" (1927, directed by Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman; silent), with Keaton and Marion Mack. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 6: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra), with Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 2:30: "The Thief of Bagdad" (1924, Raoul Walsh; silent), with Douglas Fairbanks and Anna May Wong. . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 6: "Three Bad Men" (1926, John Ford; silent), with George O'Brien and Olive Borden. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 2:30: "The Last Command" (1928, Josef von Sternberg; silent), with Emil Jannings, Evelyn Brent, and William Powell. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6 and Oct. 7 at 2: "The Spoilers" (1914, Colin Campbell; silent), with William Farnum and Kathlyn Williams. . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 5: "The Thief of Bagdad." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 2: "Three Bad Men." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 5: "The Last Command." . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 2: "It Happened One Night." . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 5: "The General."
THEATRE 2: Oct. 3 at 3: "In the King of Prussia" (1983, Emile de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 6: "Mr. Hoover and I" (1989, de Antonio), a documentary. Mr. de Antonio will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 3 and 6: "The Eye Above the Well: The Cycle of Life, Death and Life in Kerala, India" (1988, Johan van der Keuken), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 3: "America Is Hard to See" (1970, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6: "Millhouse: A White Comedy" (1971, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 2: "Rush to Judgment" (1967, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 5: "Underground" (1976, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 2: "Painters Painting" (1972, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 5: "Mr. Hoover and I." . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 2 and 5: Animated films from the Cinémathèque Quebecoise. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 3 and 6: "Laughter" (1930, Harry d'Abbadie d'Arrast), with Nancy Carroll and Fredric March. Cinematography by George Folsey.

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL—The final programs in a series of international films—At **ALICE TULLY HALL:** Oct. 2 at 6:15: "The Documentator" (Istvan Darday and Gyorgyi Szalai, Hungary). . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 7:30: "Intolerance" (D. W. Griffith, United States; 1916, silent). . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 6:15: "Life and Nothing But" (Bertrand Tavernier, France). . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 9:30: "Confession: A Chronicle of Alienation" (Georgi Gavrilov, U.S.S.R.). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 6:15: "Yaaba" (Idrissa Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 9: "Life and Nothing But." . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 6:15: "Monsieur Hire" (Patrice Leconte, France). . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 9:15: "Yaaba." . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6:15: "A City of Sadness" (Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Taiwan). . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 9:45: "Sweetie" (Jane Campion, Australia). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 11:30: "Near Death" (Frederick Wiseman, United States). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 6:30: "Current Events" (Ralph Arlyck, United States) and "Dreams from China" (Fred Marx, United States). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 9:30: "Dancing for Mr. B: Six Balanchine Ballerinas" (see Dance note, page 6.) . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 2: "Sweetie." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 5: "Monsieur Hire." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 8: "A City of Sadness." . . . **AVERY FISHER HALL:** Oct. 9 at 9: "Breaking In" (Bill Forsyth, United States). (For tickets, call 392-1911.)

MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty or so years. Oct. 3-7: F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" (1955, NBC), with Richard Franchot, George Macready, Signe Hasso, and Bill Daniels; and Sherwood Anderson's "I'm a Fool" (1954, CBS), with James Dean, Natalie Wood, and Eddie Albert. . . . From Oct. 10: Thornton Wilder's "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" (1958, CBS), with Hume Cronyn, Judith Anderson, Viveca Lindfors, Eva Le Gallienne, and Theodore Bikel. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ "Twenty Years of Monty Python." From Oct. 3: "At Last the 1958 Show" (1967), with John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Marty Feldman, and Tim Brooke-Taylor; and "Do Not Adjust Your Set" (1968), with Terry Jones, Michael Palin, and Eric Idle. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St. Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the **RIKLIS THEATRE,** "A Hand-Made World: Sixty Years of Animated Features." Oct. 4 at 2:30: "Lord of the Rings" (1978, Ralph Bakshi). . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 2:30: "The Phantom Tollbooth" (1970). . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 2:30: "Shinbone Alley" (1971). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 1: "Raggedy Ann and Andy" (1977, Richard Williams). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 3: "Watership Down" (1978). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 5: "The Mouse and His Child" (1978). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 1: "Animal Farm" (1954). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 3: "Charlotte's Web" (1973). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 5: "Yellow Submarine" (1968). . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 2:30: "Watership Down." . . . ¶ In the **WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SCREENING ROOM,** "The Rise and Fall of the Television Western," a survey of this genre, 1943-73, shown in eleven three-hour thematic programs ("Minorities and the Western," "The Classic Adult Western," and "The Warner Bros. Western" are a few of the groupings). Showings Wednesdays through Fridays at 1:30 and Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 and 2:35.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Jonas Mekas Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Oct. 4 at 8: "In the Street" (1952, Helen Levitt, James Agee, and Janet Loeb) and "The Quiet One" (1948, Sidney Myers, Levitt, and Janice Loeb). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 9:30: "The Big House" (1930, George Hill), with Robert Montgomery, Chester Morris, and Leila Hyams. . . . ¶ Oct. 5-7 at 8: Three different programs of short films by Mike and George Kuchar. . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 9:30 and Oct. 6-7 at 10: "L'Avventura" (1960, Michelangelo Antonioni), with Monica Vitti. . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 6: "The Queen of Sheba Meets the Atom Man" (1963, Ron Rice). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 8: Short films by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy, Joseph Cornell, Dwinell Grant, Stan Brakhage, and Maya Deren. . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 8: Seven short films by Robert Breer. . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 9:30: "Street Scene" (1931, King Vidor), with Sylvia Sidney, William Collier, Jr., and Estelle Taylor.

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Starting Oct. 3: "Eye for I: Video Self-Portraits," fourteen videotapes (made since 1972) by seven American artists, shown in four different programs. The exhibition was organized by French film theoretician Raymond Bellour, who will be present Oct. 10 at 6:30. Showings Tuesdays at 2 and 4:30 (Oct. 10 at 4), Wednesdays through Saturdays at 11:30 and 1:30, and Sundays at 12:30 and 2:30.

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Oct. 6 at 6:30: "Ma: Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoan-Ji" (1989, Taka Iimura; in Japanese) and "Tomorrow" (1988, Kazuo Kuroki; in Japanese).

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. (570-3949)—Oct. 10 at 8: "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" (1969, George Roy Hill), with Paul Newman, Robert Redford, and Katharine Ross. Mr. Redford and Mr. Hill will be present.

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, JR., STATE OFFICE BUILDING, Art Gallery, 163 W. 125th St. (749-5298)—Oct. 6 at 3 and 6: "Jazz Is Our Religion" (1972, John Jeremy), with Dizzy Gillespie; "The Last of the Blue Devils" (Bruce Ricker); and "After Hours" (Shepherd Traube). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 2 and 6:05: "Round Midnight" (1987, Bertrand Tavernier), with Dexter Gordon; and three short films—"Les McCann Trio"; "Anything for Jazz: Jaki Byard"; and "Born to Swing: The Count Basie Alumni" (John Jeremy). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 2 and 6:05: "Gospel" (1982, David Leivick); "Rare Gospel Films"; and "The Last of the Blue Devils."

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

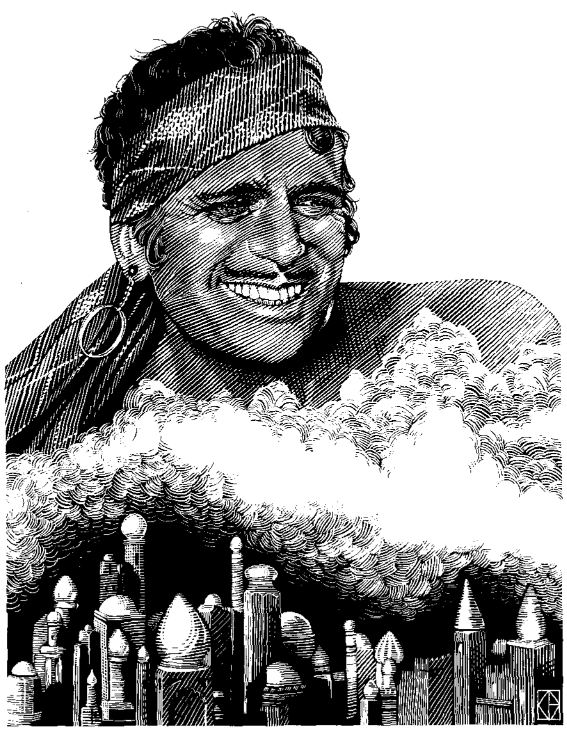
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

THE ABYSS—This undersea epic is more complex technically than the previous films written and directed by James Cameron—"The Terminator" and "Aliens"—and, disastrously, it aims for emotional complexity as well. The main characters are an estranged married couple (Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) who are forced to work together in an emergency salvage operation—searching the depths for a nuclear submarine that met with a mysterious accident. Cameron wants to turn this routine plot into a metaphor for the couple's attempt to salvage their relationship. Although that isn't a very subtle idea, he might have managed to put it over if he had concentrated on the action and let the meanings take care of themselves. But the action sequences are confusingly edited, the dialogue is painfully explicit, and the B-movie suspense devices he uses tend to violate the integrity of the metaphor. The big message is, You have to touch bottom—way, way down there—before you can see the light. Michael Biehn plays the villain.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/4/89.) (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Gotham Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas; through Oct. 5.)

BATMAN—Tim Burton's powerfully glamorous comic-book epic, with sets angled and lighted like film noir, goes beyond pulp. It has a funky, nihilistic charge, and an eerie, poetic intensity. Michael Keaton is the fabulously wealthy Bruce Wayne, who patrols the sinister nighttime canyons of Gotham City in the guise of Batman, and Jack Nicholson is the sniggering mobster Jack Napier, who turns into the leering madman the Joker. The two are fighting for the soul of the city that spawned them. The movie is underwritten, but it has so many unpredictable spins that what's missing doesn't seem to matter much. It's mean and anarchic and blissful. Written by Sam Hamm, Warren Skaaren (and uncredited others), based on characters created by Bob Kane. With cinematography by Roger Pratt; design by Anton Furst; costumes by Bob Ringwood; a plangent score by Danny Elfman; and songs by Prince. The cast includes Jack Palance, Kim Basinger, Jerry Hall, and Robert Wuhl.—P.K. (7/10/89) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Columbia Cinema; through Oct. 5.)

THE BIG PICTURE—The first feature directed by the actor Christopher Guest is a distressingly mild satire of Hollywood dealmaking in the eighties. Guest and his fellow-screenwriters, Michael Varhol and Michael McKean, frame their jokes about the stupidity of the movie industry with a dreary plot: Nick (Kevin Bacon) makes a student film that gets him a studio deal; he compromises and compromises in his desire for success, becomes an arrogant jerk who abuses his true-blue friends, loses his deal in a corporate reshuffle, learns to be a nice guy again, and finally gets to make his picture, his way. The only reason for seeing "The Big Picture" is Martin Short, who, in the tiny role (uncredited) of Nick's agent, provides ten minutes or so of wild, subversive inspiration. He's done up in a curly wig, his eyes slant upward at an alarming angle (he looks as if he'd had plastic surgery done by Doctor Caligari), and everything he says is nonsense, delivered with the slimy intimacy of show-biz patter. Among the other performers, Bacon, J. T. Walsh (as a studio executive), and Jennifer Jason Leigh (as a particularly flaky film student) all have their moments.—T.R. (9/18/89) (59th Street East Cinema.)

CASUALTIES OF WAR—A great, intense movie about war and rape, based on a Vietnam incident of 1966 that was reported in this magazine (October 18, 1969) by the late Daniel Lang. He gave an emotionally devastating account of the actions of a squad of five American soldiers who kidnapped a Vietnamese village girl, raped her, and then covered up their crime by killing her. One of the five men refused to take part in the rape, and, despite threats and attempts on his life, forced the Army to bring the other four to trial. He's the one who suffers from guilt: he can't forgive himself for his inability to save the girl's life. Directed by Brian De Palma, the movie has the purity of films such as "Grand Illusion" and "Shoeshine"; it's the



Douglas Fairbanks in "The Thief of Bagdad"

culmination of his best work. Sean Penn gives a daring performance as the squad's twenty-year-old leader; Michael J. Fox is impressive as the soldier who can't keep quiet; Thuy Thu Le is the dazed, battered girl who haunts the movie long before she's dead. The adaptation (too explicit in a few places) is by David Rabe; the cinematography is by Stephen H. Burum; the music is by Ennio Morricone.—P.K. (8/21/89) (Warner.)

Dead Poets Society—Robin Williams gives an astonishingly empathic performance as an eager, dedicated prep-school teacher in the late fifties. This teacher talks to his boys about the passions expressed in poetry and helps them release their creative impulses. But one of the boys, soaring on his new confidence, lacks the shrewdness and courage to deal with his rigid, uncomprehending father, and makes a disastrous choice. Directed by Peter Weir, from a script by Thomas Schulman, the picture draws out the obvious and turns itself into a classic. Weir, it appears, is more interested in the elegiac than in the dramatic. Like his "Gallipoli," this film has a gold ribbon attached to it. With Robert Sean Leonard, Ethan Hawke, Josh Charles, Gale Hansen, and Kurtwood Smith and Norman Lloyd.—P.K. (6/26/89) (Guild. . . . ¶ Gramercy; through Oct. 5.)

Do the Right Thing—The third feature by Spike Lee takes place in the black neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, on a punishingly hot day; the focus of the action is a pizzeria, Sal's Famous, which is apparently the last white-owned business on the block; and the climax is a riot sparked by a monstrous act of police brutality. At its most basic, Lee's intention is to demonstrate how in a racially polarized society the slow accumulation of small irritations can swell to something huge and ugly and lethal. It's a solid idea for a movie, and initially the picture provides its share of incidental pleasures. And, although most of the many characters Lee shows us are types, at least there are a lot of different ones, and their encounters are often funny. But Lee goes wrong by pushing his material to a "powerful" climax, a Scorsese-like explosion of violence: he sacrifices political clarity for the sake of the big statement. He's nimble-witted and passionate, but his movie seems to shout at us rather than speak to us. In addition to writing, producing, and directing, Lee plays the pivotal role of Mookie, the pizza deliveryman. Others in the cast are Danny Aiello (as Sal), Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Giancarlo Esposito, Bill Nunn, Rosie Perez, Joie Lee, John Turturro, and Richard Edson; as a trio of middle-aged street-corner philosophers, Paul Benjamin, Frankie Faison, and Robin Harris are responsible for the movie's best, loosest scenes.—T.R. (7/24/89) (23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Cinema 3. Evenings only. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; through Oct. 5.)

A Dry White Season—In Johannesburg, a naïve white schoolmaster (Donald Sutherland) has his eyes opened to the police brutality involved in the death of his black gardener, and imagines he can obtain justice for the man's family. Marlon Brando is airily light and masterly as the veteran anti-apartheid barrister who takes the case even though he knows that he can't get anywhere with the rigged court. The romantic in Brando must have responded to the old rebel's romantic gesture: he saves the picture for the (short) time he's onscreen. But the director, Euzhan Palcy, seems lost; her work is heavy-handed, and the script (by Colin Welland and the director, from a novel by André Brink) is earnest and didactic. Performers such as Susan Sarandon, Jurgen Prochnow, Winston Ntshona, Janet Suzman, Michael Gambon, and Zakes Mokae sink into the obviousness of their roles and leave no trace. (Poor, uninspired, virtuous Sutherland is out of it; his characterization is one long whimper.)—P.K. (10/2/89) (Loews New York Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Each Dawn I Die (1939)—The title of this prison picture is superb; convicts have often said that the title describes their feelings exactly. But nothing in the melodrama lives up to it. James Cagney plays an honest, muckraking reporter who is framed and sent up by a crooked D.A.; on his way to prison, he meets George Raft (slick and crooked as usual—which is welcome here). Cagney's virtuous suffering grows tedious, and the script (full of double crosses and jailbreaks) isn't persuasive. The director, William Keighley, brings off some moderately forceful scenes, but toward the end of the thirties the Warners underworld pictures began to get hazy and high-minded, and in this one the pre-Second World War spiritual irradiation blurs the conventions of the prison genre. With Jane Bryan as Cagney's girl, George Bancroft as the warden, and Slapsy Maxie Rosenbloom as an amiable con.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 9-10.)

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids—A contraption invented by a suburban nerd scientist (Rick Moranis) cuts both his kids and the neighbors' down to size: a quarter of an inch. Unaware of what has happened, and unable to hear their pipsqueak cries, Dad sweeps them into a dustpan, dumps them in a garbage bag, and hauls the bag out to the curb. The kids have to make their way back to the house across the (not very recently mowed) lawn—a long trek for tiny, tiny legs. There are adventures, of course, engineered by the sort of special-effects "magic" that probably even the youngest audiences have learned by now to dread. The real surprise of this movie—which was directed by Joe Johnston, an effects specialist from Industrial Light & Magic, and which carries an immense list of technical credits (including a "Scorpion Crew," a "Bee Sequence Crew," and a "Stop Motion Ant Crew")—is that it's friendly, good-humored, and unpretentious. Johnston manages to scale down not only the kids but also the movie's sense of its own importance. Also with Matt Frewer, Marcia Strassman, and Kristine Sutherland; Jared Rushton, Amy O'Neill, Thomas Brown, and Robert Oliveri are the kids. The imaginative cinematography is by Hiro Narita.—T.R. (Embassy.)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—This mediocre third film in the Indiana Jones trilogy—a reprise of the first, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"—is a mixture of cliffhanger and anti-Nazi thriller and religious spectacle. It's enjoyable, but familiar, and the action lacks the exhilarating, leaping precision that the director, Steven Spielberg, is famous for. The only real spin is in the slapstick teamwork of Harrison Ford, as the archeologist-adventurer Indy, and Sean Connery, as Indy's father, a medievalist who's too engrossed in his studies to pay much attention to his daredevil son's triumphs. With River Phoenix playing Indy as a boy, Alison Doody, Denholm Elliott, John Rhys-Davies, and Julian Glover. The screenplay, by Jeffrey Boam, is based on a story devised by the producer George Lucas and Menno Meyjes.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Embassy.)

Lethal Weapon 2—Chases, explosions, fights, barrages of insults, the odd moment of manly sentimentality—these are the standard elements of American action movies in the eighties, and the "Lethal Weapon" movies use them with an amazing lack of shame. There's lots of comedy, but no real relief: the punch lines slam into our brains like cars into plate-glass windows. The only thing that makes this movie at all distinctive is its hero, a reckless L.A. cop named Riggs, a role that allows Mel Gibson to zip through the picture like a free electron. Riggs isn't actually trying to kill himself this time (as he was in the first movie), but he's still a wild man and Gibson is still having a great time playing him. It's a mischievous, sprightly performance: he treats the action sequences as if they were slapstick routines. (Unfortunately, the director, Richard Donner, doesn't have as light a touch.) Danny Glover plays his partner, Murtaugh, an easygoing, conservative black family man; he's mostly called upon to react with horror to Riggs' dangerous antics, and the joke of their relationship gets a little tiresome. (The effect, sometimes, is of a white guy doing heroic stuff while his black pal shuffles along beside him. Glover, a good actor, deserves better.) Joe Pesci does small wonders with his supporting role as a ferrety, motor-mouthed money launderer, and Joss Ackland glowers like Alastair Sim as the head villain, a South African diplomat who smuggles drugs. Also with Patsy Kensit. Jeffrey Boam wrote the screenplay. The score is by Michael Kamen, Eric Clapton, and David Sanborn.—T.R. (Festival, Loews 84th Street

In the 1924 "The Thief of Bagdad" (October 5 and 7 at the Museum of Modern Art), Douglas Fairbanks overflows with physical euphoria. He's different from the action heroes we usually see today. He's got the body of an acrobat, not a bodybuilder: it's as taut, agile, and graceful as it is powerful. His wedgelike torso probably served as the model for the first comic-book superheroes. And as the star of an Arabian Nights extravaganza he gets to be faster than a speeding street mob, more powerful than a Mongol army, able to leap tall castles with a single bound. Fairbanks wrote the script (pseudonymously), and, as the producer, hired director Raoul Walsh and art director William Cameron Menzies. But Fairbanks the actor is his most astonishing creation.

As a thief who lives by the seat of his harem pants, he displays the atavistic instincts of a dog (able to sniff out dinner cooking and then steal it) and the reflexes of a master gymnast (descending a collapsing magic rope). His romantic impudence spurs him to court a princess and abandon his life of petty crime. Even more than the movie's special-effects and design wizards, Fairbanks wins our applause—and laughter—whether he's fending off monsters or racing over the backs of worshippers bowed in prayer. His seductively outrageous movie—co-starring Snitz Edwards as his droll sidekick, sinuous Julanne Johnston as the princess, So-Jin as the creepy Mongol villain, and Anna May Wong as the princess's beautiful, treacherous Mongol slave—is an adolescent daydream come true.

AIG Issues Forum

Why it's vital to all Ame environmental trust f

SOMEBODY'S CLEANING UP, BUT IT'S NOT THE ENVIRONMENT.

Federal legislation creating Superfund was first enacted almost 10 years ago.

Priority action has been set for 1,200 of the most hazardous waste sites. And the list is growing.

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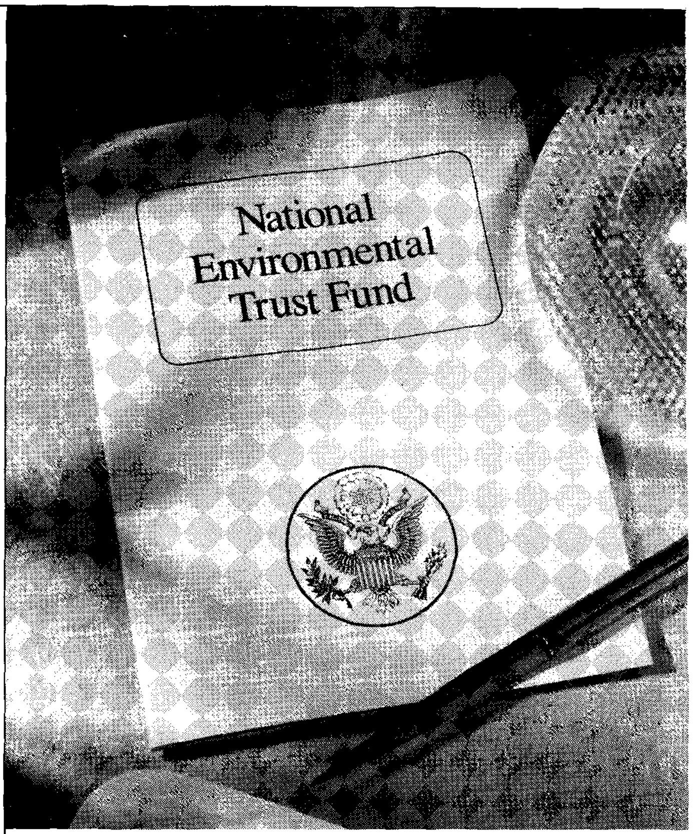

Legislation is needed to create a National Environmental Trust Fund.

THERE'S MORE ACTION IN THE COURTROOM THAN AT THE CLEAN UP SITES.

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d...and to do so now.

better approach to the problem of cleaning up old hazardous waste sites. One that spreads the cost more broadly–and more equitably.

HERE'S AN IDEA THAT MAY SOUND SELF-SERVING UNTIL YOU SEE HOW MUCH SENSE IT MAKES.

We propose creating a National Environmental Trust Fund similar to the National Highway Trust Fund.

Its resources would be dedicated solely to cleaning up those hazardous waste sites where no intentional environmental harm was done by firms which under today's laws–applied retroactively–are forced to pay astronomical cleanup costs.

The fund could be financed by adding a separate fee to commercial/industrial insurance premiums now paid in the U.S.

Even a modest assessment–say, 2% of premiums–would provide about $40 billion over the next decade, more than enough to deal with the top 1,200 highest priority waste sites.

Funds would be collected by insurance companies and remitted to a responsible agency, with an advisory board of private citizens and public officials charged with administering the program.

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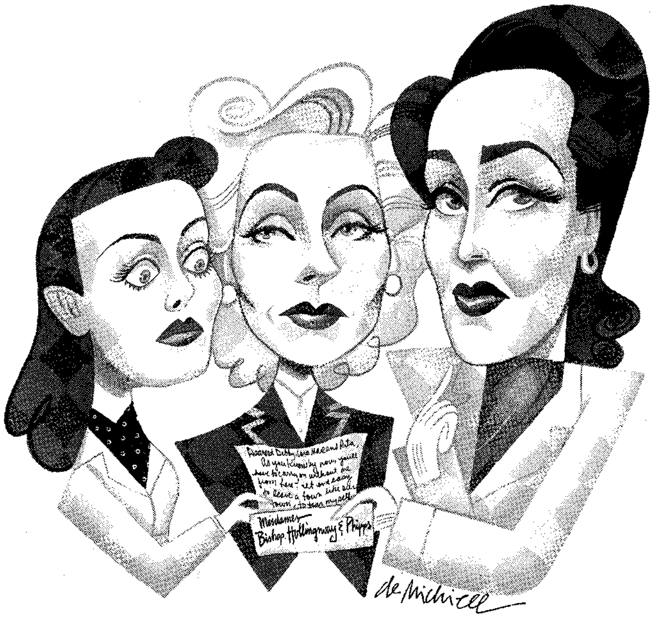
Sixplex, and West Side Cinema. . . . ¶ Columbia Cinema; starting Oct. 6, tentative.)

A LETTER TO THREE WIVES (1949)—Joseph L. Mankiewicz won Academy Awards for Best Screenplay and Best Director for this satirical comedy on American social and marital conventions. The letter is from the town seductress informing the three wives that she has taken away one of their husbands: as each threatened wife reviews her marriage, we get, at best, a sharp, frequently hilarious look at suburbia, and, at worst, a slick series of bright remarks. Mankiewicz coaxed good performances out of Jeanne Crain and Linda Darnell, and the others certainly didn't need coaxing—Paul Douglas is pretty close to magnificent, and Ann Sothern, Kirk Douglas, Florence Bates, Thelma Ritter, and Connie Gilchrist are first-rate. With narration by Celeste Holm. From a story by John Klempner.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; starting Oct. 11.)



Jeanne Crain, Ann Sothern, and Linda Darnell in "A Letter to Three Wives"

THE LITTLE THIEF—Claude Miller's movie, set in the early fifties, is about a rebellious provincial teen-ager named Janine (Charlotte Gainsbourg). The screenplay (by Miller, his wife, Annie, and Luc Béraud) is based on an original story by François Truffaut and Claude de Givray; Truffaut himself reportedly planned to direct a film of the story. This movie bears recognizable traces of the late New Wave director: it's gentle-natured and sympathetic to the young, and its structure is casual and anecdotal, like the Doinel movies. What it lacks is Truffaut's energy. Miller is a perfectly decent craftsman, and the movie is never unwatchable, but nothing drives it forward from one scene to the next, and Janine's lucklessness and her tough-kid spirit don't resonate as Antoine's do. For Truffaut, the story wasn't the most important thing; it's all that's left of him in "The Little Thief." Also with Didier Bezace, Simon de la Brosse, and Nathalie Cardone. In French.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

MADAME SATAN (1930)—A hodgepodge by Cecil B. De Mille, culminating in an extravagant costume party aboard an enormous dirigible. When the dirigible is struck by lightning, the guests parachute down, except the parachuteless hero, Reginald Denny, who jumps to safety in the Central Park Reservoir—a stunt that the movies have never repeated. There are lots of songs and dances, and even a ballet in the dirigible. Lillian Roth, buxom and dimpled before she boozed and repented and told all ("I'll Cry Tomorrow"), is the wildly energetic showgirl Trixie; Kay Johnson is the heroine—the wife who disguises herself as Madame Satan in order to win her husband back. Also with Roland Young and Martha Sleeper. You have to wait so long for the dirigible climax that you're too exhausted to enjoy its lunacy.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 10-11.)

PARENTHOOD—The script, by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is ambitiously constructed, tracing the relationships of several boomer-age parents with their kids, their siblings, and their own parents. The advantage of this arrangement is that none of the characters are onscreen very long: we have time to get sick of only about half of them, and some—especially the nervous, eager dad played by Steve Martin—are fun to watch. The drawback is that the movie has no drive. The dull title captures the tone precisely: the whole thing has been conceived generically, abstractly, and by the end the director, Ron Howard, is rushing from scene to scene tidying up loose ends, to make sure that each little individual drama gets its point across and that they all add up to a correct answer to the essay question "What is parenthood?" The movie tries very hard, but its wisdom is on the forlorn side. Also with Mary Steenburgen, Rick Moranis, Dianne Wiest, Jason Robards, Harley Kozak, Martha Plimpton, Keanu Reeves, and Tom Hulce. —T.R. (8/7/89) (Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema, and National Twin; through Oct. 5.)

PENN & TELLER GET KILLED—There's a terrific opening sequence with the pair of prankster magicians on a live late-night talk show; the screen is full of hoopla and graphics, and it's as if some new kind of bludgeoning, hip comedy were being invented—as if the Three Stooges had taken over "Saturday Night Live." But when the TV show is over, the snap goes out of the movie. It's meant to take off from Penn's remark that it would be fun if a killer were stalking him, but basically it's about the two magicians playing murderous practical jokes on each other, and it's extremely laborious. Caitlin Clarke does appealing backup work as the team's manager, and Christopher Durang turns up as a sneaky nut with a gun concealed in a hollowed-out Bible. Directed by Arthur Penn (no relation), from a script by Penn and Teller. Shot mostly in Atlantic City, by the Danish cinematographer Jan Weincke, who's great on black backgrounds. —P.K. (10/2/89) (Sutton; through Oct. 5.)

SEA OF LOVE—This romantic thriller, written by Richard Price and directed by Harold Becker, has a simple and rather familiar story: a cop (Al Pacino) investigating a series of murders falls in love with one of the suspects. But the movie isn't entirely predictable; it provides plenty of surprises, odd little riffs that keep us alert. And Pacino is amazing. He's playing a middle-aged, divorced, depressed, semi-alcoholic man who exposes himself to great peril by conducting an affair with a young woman who might be a killer. The actor's face has a saggy, disappointed look now, but there's something hopeful, a wary avidity, in his eyes. In this role, he seems to be startling himself with his own vitality. Barkin is perfectly cast as an ambiguous object of desire; she can look very soft or very, very hard, and the camera doesn't know quite what to make of her. It's a consistently entertaining movie, although Becker's direction has a tendency to flatten the highs in the material. (And Price's script, full of sharp dialogue and smart ideas, nevertheless has a few characteristic lapses—most damagingly, a slackening of inspiration toward the end.) Also with John Goodman (in good form, as the hero's partner), William Hickey, Richard Jenkins, Christine Estabrook, and Michael Rooker. (The title song, a pop ballad first recorded by Phil Phillips in 1959, is played throughout the movie, and it works beautifully.)—T.R. (9/18/89) (Bijou Cinema, Bay Cinema, Coronet, Loews Orpheum, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Metro Cinema.)

SEX, LIES, AND VIDEOTAPE—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest; he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Plaza, Waverly, and Cinema Studio.)

SHIRLEY VALENTINE—Willy Russell, who wrote the play (and the movie) "Educating Rita," gives us another Englishwoman learning a thing or two about life. This time, it's a housewife in her forties whose kids are grown and gone and whose husband is so unresponsive that she spends a lot of time talking to the kitchen wall. A friend persuades her to come along on a two-week holiday in Greece, and Shirley, away from her dull husband and her constricted life, starts to enjoy herself for the first time since her adolescence. But she's not just having a fling or reliving her giddy youth—the writer wants us to understand that she's experiencing deeper, maturer pleasures. Russell's script is an adaptation of his play, which was a monologue. Though this isn't a one-woman show anymore, it's still a showcase for perky, round-faced Pauline Collins. She's very likable, and her performance is mercifully restrained. Lewis Gilbert's direction is long on maturity and short on pleasure: the picture moves at a careful, measured, guided-tour pace. By the end, poor Shirley seems more than ever like a lost soul: an Edna O'Brien character who woke up and found herself on "The Love Boat." Also with Tom Conti.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Angelika Film Center, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

SISTERS (1973)—Brian De Palma's low-budget horror movie about a psychotic ex-Siamese twin has its share of flaked-out humor (as in the TV-game-show parody at the beginning) and De Palma does some virtuoso stunts. The facetious dialogue is a wet blanket, and De Palma isn't quite up to his apparent intention—to provide cheap thrills that are also a parody of old corn. He manages the thrills, though (there are some demented knife slashings), and audiences seemed to be happily freaked by Bernard Herrmann's score, with its old radio-play throb and zing. With Margot Kidder, who knows how to turn on sexiness with a witch's precision, and Jennifer Salt, who gives a feeble performance as a nitwit girl reporter. Also with Charles Durning, Lisle Wilson, Mary Davenport, Bill Finley, and Barnard Hughes. Shakily written by De Palma and Louisa Rose.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Oct. 6-7.)

TOM JONES (1963)—Tony Richardson whizzes through the Fielding novel, pausing for a marvellous, lewd eating scene. With Albert Finney, Hugh Griffith, Edith Evans, George Devine, Joan Greenwood, Joyce Redman, and many others.—P.K. (Paris.)

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY . . .—Rob Reiner's movie, from a script by Nora Ephron, takes a screwball-comedy idea and inflates it like a rubber raft. Harry (Billy Crystal) and Sally (Meg Ryan) meet in the late seventies, rub each other the wrong way, and then, after breaking up with their partners, become close friends; all the while, they're conducting a running debate on the question "Can a man and a woman ever be just friends, without sex getting in the way?" It's a Rohmer movie played as a sitcom. Crystal muddles through amiably, but Ryan flounders: the filmmakers give her impossible, unplayable scenes, and all she can do is be adorable. The movie keeps telling us that it's real and truthful and universal. Everything in it seems false. —T.R. (8/7/89) (Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Regency. . . . ¶ Beekman, and Waverly; through Oct. 5. . . . ¶ Gotham Cinema; starting Oct. 6, tentative.)

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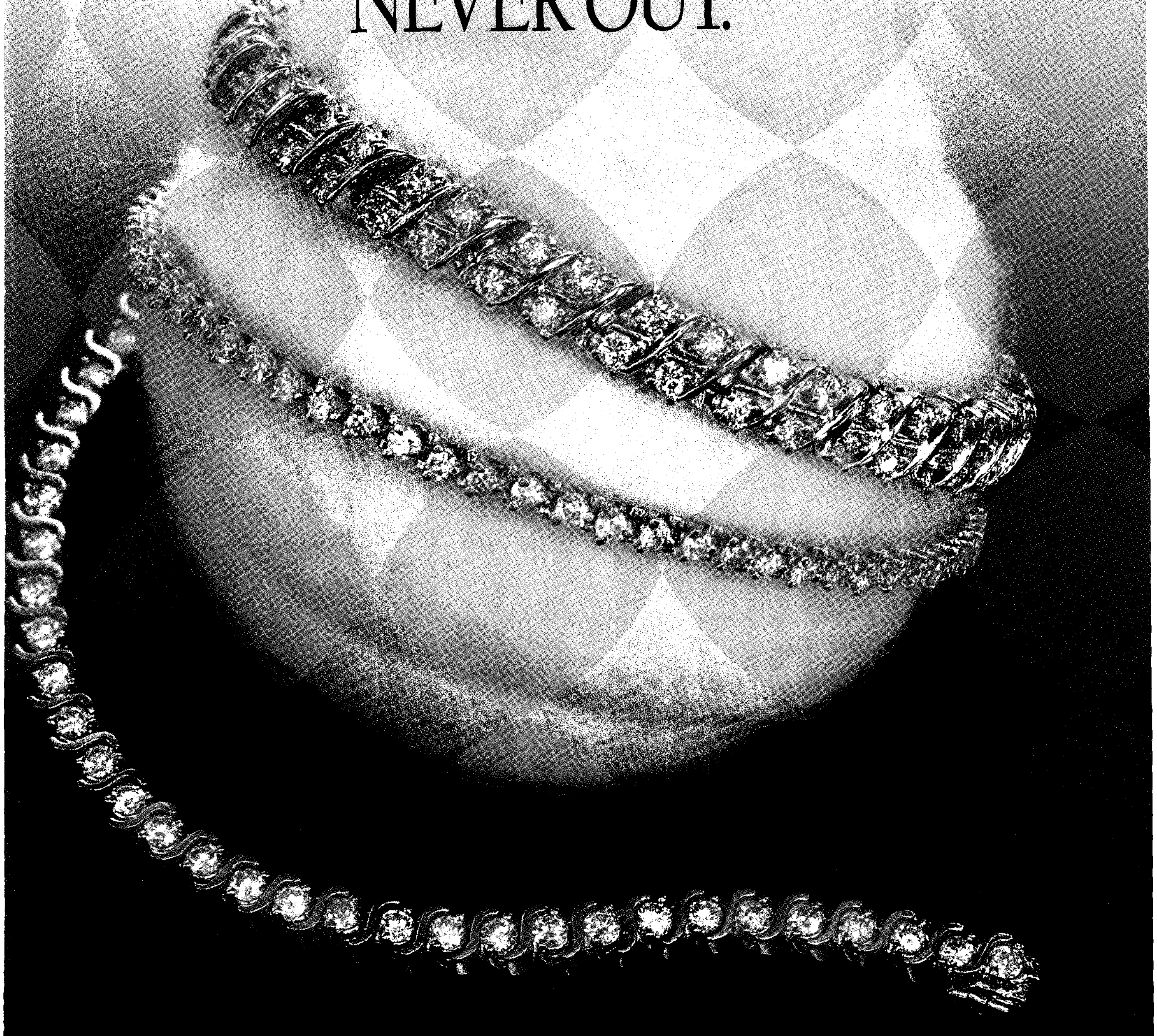

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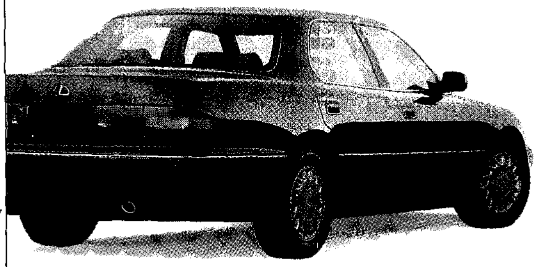

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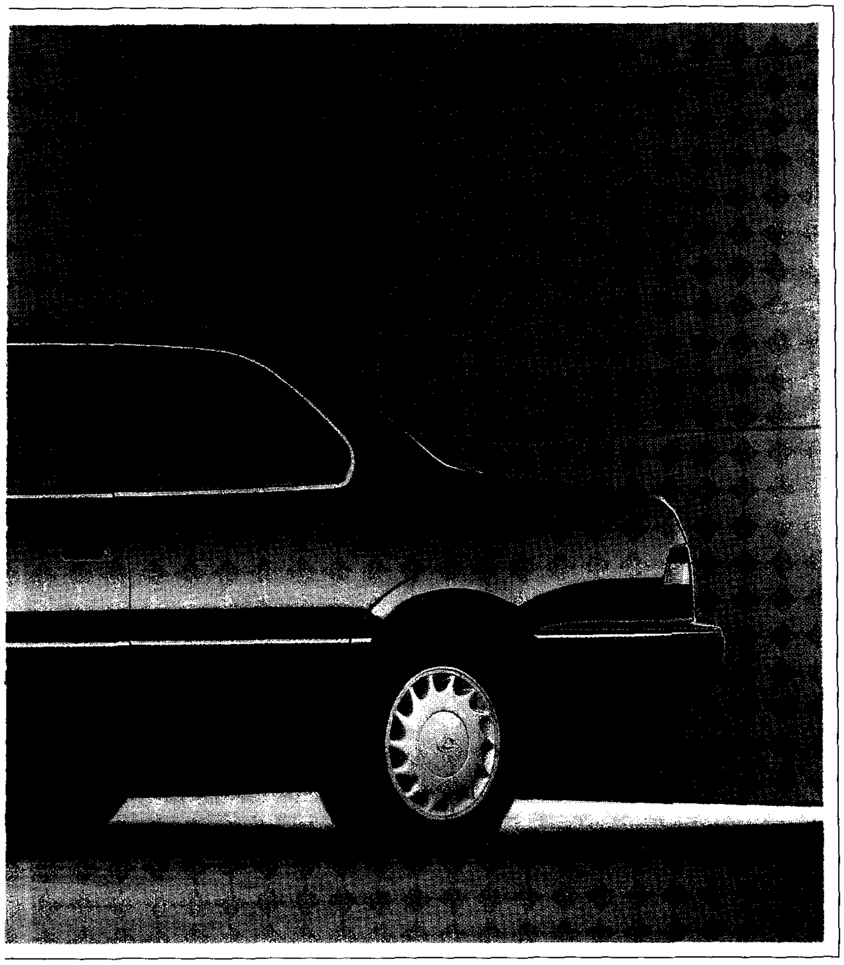

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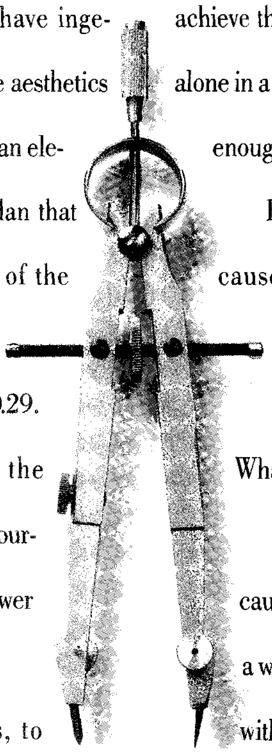

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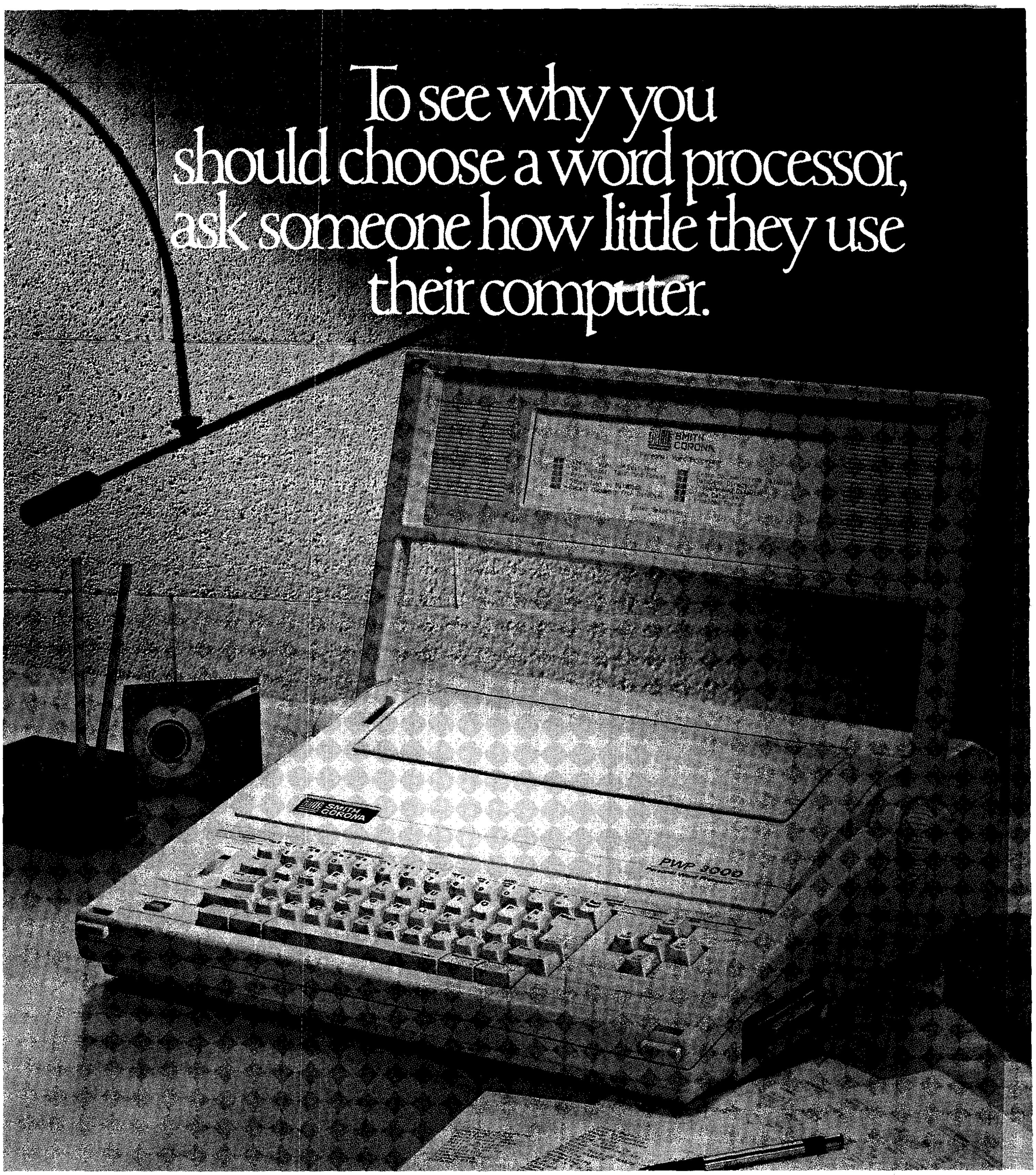

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

WHEN Tip O'Neill said, "All politics is local," he was talking about the way political issues are shaped by local interests. Defense policy, for example, logically calls for an overview of national-security needs, yet it is often dictated by employment levels in factories that happen to depend on defense contracts and are in the district of an influential congressman. In such cases, local interest debases the issue with a shortsighted and self-serving perspective. But there's another kind of local politics, and it works in a way that's almost completely opposite. For instance, the City Council of Irvine, California, recently passed legislation restricting the use of chlorofluorocarbons within the city limits. This legislation will cause hardships for local businesses and raise the cost of some consumer goods for local people, and these sacrifices will not be rewarded by any special environmental benefits to the citizens of Irvine. Everyone in the world, and for generations to come, will benefit, but only by an infinitesimal amount, and the citizens of Irvine no more than anyone else. From a realist's point of view, Irvine's action seems almost unnatural; it's idealistic, even quixotic, for little Irvine to take responsibility for the sky. And yet on an emotional level the action seems exactly right.

As global problems become overwhelming, the idea of locality assumes a new political importance. The issue of nuclear armaments, for example, presents two conflicting perspectives. From the international, panoramic perspective of the government in Washington, a nuclear defense seems reasonable, but from the perspective of, say, someone sitting under a tree in his back yard the idea of a nuclear defense appears insane. People sitting in their back yards have no power—none, anyway, that might have a meaningful impact on the nuclear situation. Nor, usually, do they have much knowledge about defense strategy. And yet home is the place where the deepest response to the nuclear situation takes place. If one imagined a political order based solely on personal responses to the nuclear situation, the natural unit of that order would be very small—somewhere between a county and a parish, or maybe even smaller. Similarly, global environmental problems are both intimate and transcendent.

Ever since global issues have overtaken our world, the price of political awareness has been a feeling of helplessness. The technical aspects of these problems and the formidable expertise that is brought to bear on them generate confusion in us all, but even children can sense through that confusion the inability of our trustees to effectively take responsibility. Governments become enveloped by an aura of pretense. Leaders seem to fear that if they admit that a situation is lethal and out of control they will lose their authority, and yet in not admitting it they lose authority anyway.

It may be that authority—the power to take responsibility—can at this point be recovered only on a local level, and that this is why local politics has acquired new significance. In any case, the action in Irvine—or in Suffolk County, New York, or in Vermont, where related actions have been taken—does not have about it the quality of confusion that afflicts so many government actions on global concerns. Irvine's step does not come anywhere near solving the problem of ozone depletion, but the Irvine City Council did not claim that it would: so large is the sky and so small is Irvine that the relationship of the city to the problem is automatically acknowledged as that of tiny beings to something utterly beyond their control. In this acknowledgment, true scale is recovered, and, with it, effectiveness. The problems of the environment are beyond the power of Irvine to solve, but because the city took responsibility where it could, it is no longer helpless. It examined its own contribution to the destruction of the ozone, asked, "If not us, who?" and heard the answer "No one."

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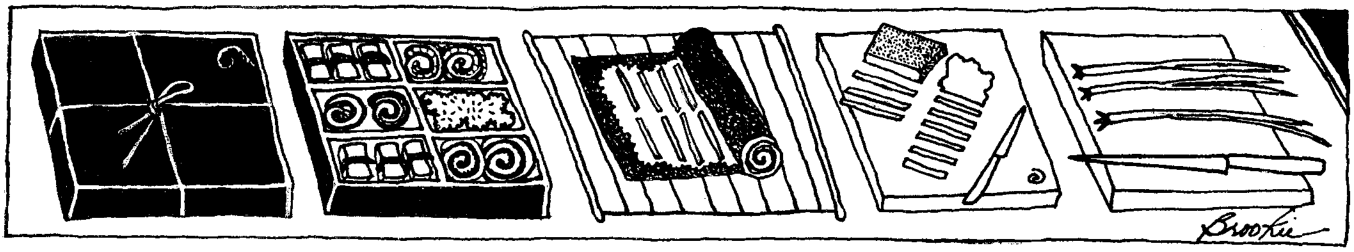
Show of Shows

WHEN we heard that a "Saturday Night Live" special, on the occasion of the show's fifteenth anniversary, would be broadcast by NBC



on a Sunday evening, and that it would include taped segments, we felt somewhat cheated, and we arranged to go to a rehearsal for the live portions of the show. At 2 p.m. on the Saturday before the broadcast, we walked through the doors of 30 Rockefeller Plaza, passed a knot of autograph hounds and paparazzi exchanging the names of the stars who were rumored to be on the way ("Robin Williams, Steve Martin, Robin Williams, Eddie Murphy, Robin Williams . . ."), took an elevator to the eighth floor, and found Studio 8H, where there were lots of uniformed security people and photographers, and, over the lintel, a hand-lettered paper sign that said "The Fun Begins Here."

Inside, we fell into conversation with a couple of guys in the front row of the audience section who turned out to be two of the show's five main writers. Both had brought reading matter with them. Herb Sargent, who has worked with the show for fourteen years, was leafing through the latest issue of *Details*. Tom Schiller, who has been associated with the show for about half as long as Mr. Sargent, was reading Knut Hamsun's "Pan," a novel full of sentences like "It can rain and it can blow—these are not the things that count." Pointing toward Eugene Lee, the show's production designer, who was running around with glittering eyes and a manic smile and waving a seating chart, Mr. Schiller said of "Pan," "It's the antithesis of all this. You read it to recapture your poetic youth."

We asked Mr. Sargent how he made notes for a script.

He stared at us for a moment. "Stickums," he said. "I put them everywhere. Now I've discovered a glue that can make a stickum out of anything. If they would only find a way to catalogue stickums, we'd be all set."

Wait—wasn't that a famous person on the set? It was Tom Hanks, practicing his opening monologue. And so the procession began. Jerry Hall and Charlton Heston spoke from prepared texts; only Mr. Heston's, a crank letter he'd written to the show in 1977, survived intact on Sunday. (Ms. Hall was supposed to introduce Prince, and her text went, " 'Saturday Night Live' has always presented two kinds of musical guests: people you've never heard of before and people you're glad never to see again. What *this* guy's doing here I have no idea. I've never seen anyone look so good in a garter belt and stockings—except my husband.") O. J. Simpson, with shoulders as wide as a fridge and a waist narrow enough to rival Jerry Hall's, kept fluffing his lines. (On Sunday, his delivery was perfect.) Jane Curtin and Laraine Newman came on together for a Gilda Radner tribute. Ms. Curtin was interested to note that someone had spelled her name "Curtain" on the cue cards.

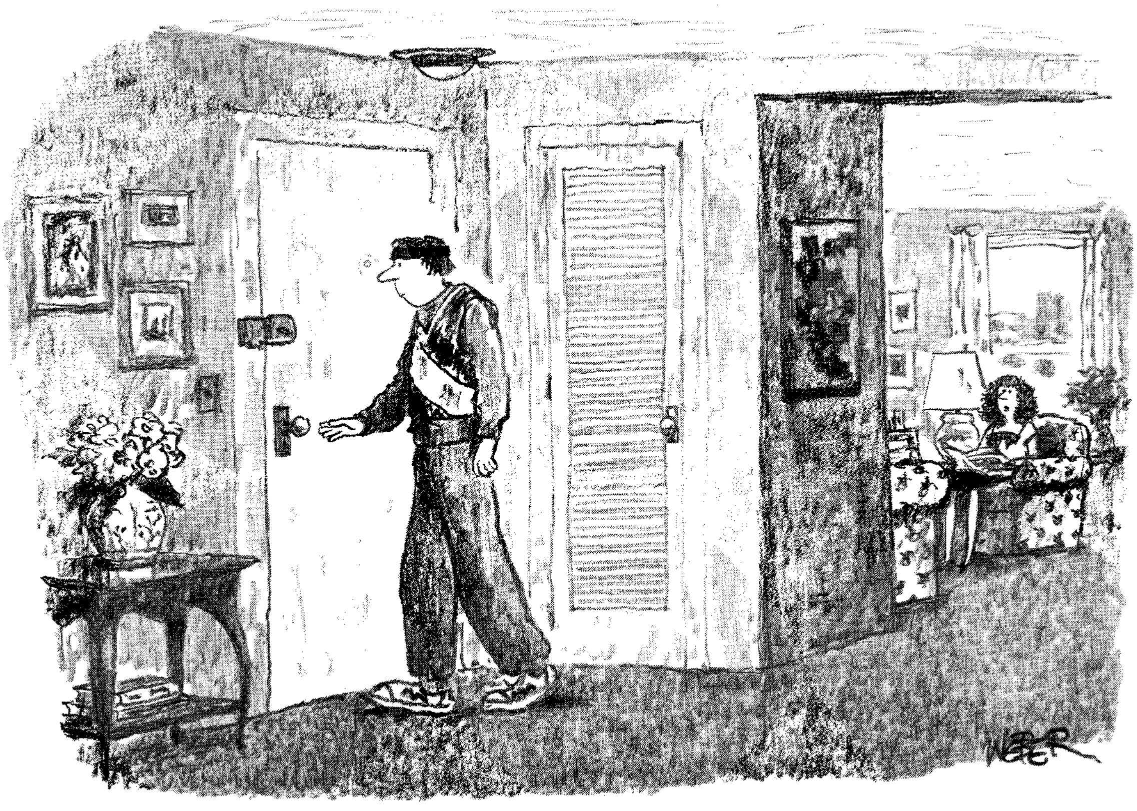
During a quiet moment, Buck Henry walked on alone. For a while, no one noticed. He leaned against a camera support, looked around 8H pensively, and whistled a tuneless tune. Then the director, Dave Wilson, spotted him. They shook hands. "It's good to see you," said Mr. Henry.

"Like old times," said Mr. Wilson.

Steve Martin strolled in, wearing a blue jacket, which set off his white hair and his pale skin. Mr. Henry and Mr. Martin joined up for a sketch in which Mr. Martin recited "Woo!" over and over. Father Guido Sarducci arrived, wearing a black raincoat, chinos, cowboy boots, and a T-shirt with a Russian message. When we asked him what it said, he suggested, " 'Kiss me, I'm Italian'?"

Chevy Chase appeared, and suddenly the whole studio seemed touched with excitement. He ran around behind the back row of seats, plotting the fall he would take down a staircase. After a while, he met in a corner with Father Guido, Billy Crystal, Martin Short, Tom Hanks, Dan Aykroyd, and Steve Martin for a talk that everyone else was dying to hear. We can report that all the discussants laughed a lot, and that Mary Tyler Moore, seated at the other end of the room, kept turning around to look at them, adjusting her glasses.

Eventually, Steve Martin went over to shake Ms. Moore's hand, and Chevy Chase discovered Garrett Morris sitting nearby with friends. Mr. Chase stepped back and crashed into a

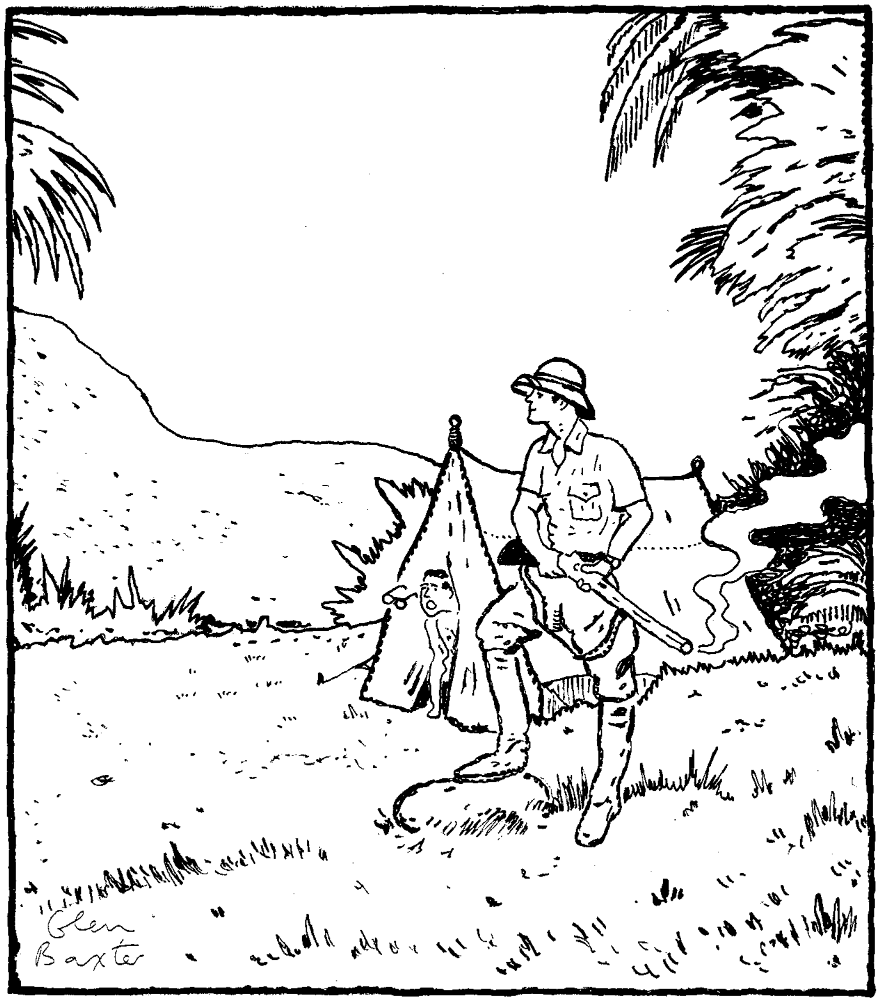


"*You can run, Elliot, but you can't hide.*"

railing. "Ouch," he said. "I've already hurt myself."

Tom Hanks, on his way out, remarked to two recent "S.N.L." cast members, Jan Hooks and Phil Hartman, "Everybody's going to say that I loved the show when I was a cast member. I never *was* a cast member. I got a few mercy bookings over the years. I was never privy to the jungle drums."

It got to be 11 P.M. We left the way we had come. As we got out of the elevator, a weary remnant of the stargazing faithful eyed us dubiously. Suddenly, another elevator opened. A woman emerged, holding an infant that couldn't have been more than a few weeks old. Behind them was a man wearing a broad-brimmed hat, and beside him were two men in formal jackets, looking from side to side. The stargazers surged forward. "Robin!" cried one. "Robin!" The little family slid into a dark stretch limo, which gleamed in the street lights. We hailed a cab; as we opened the door, the handle fell off into our hand. Live, from New York, it was Saturday night!



I CERTAINLY IMPRESSED THE LOCALS WHEN I BAGGED MY FIRST MALE MOSQUITO.

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The Greatest

LAST June, a mahogany desk, of the kind often called a secretary, was sold in New York for twelve million one hundred thousand dollars, the most money ever paid at a fine-arts auction for anything other than a painting. It seemed to us such an astronomical price that we set out to learn why *any* piece of furniture might be worth it.

Built around 1760 in Newport, Rhode Island, by a celebrated cabinetmaker named John Goddard, and appraised some thirty years later at £95—twenty thousand dollars in today's money—the desk, until its sale this year, had been in the same family since its manufacture, and had sat in the same room in the same house for over two hundred years. When the desk was consigned for auction, appraisers who examined it found a Parcheesi board in one drawer, stubby pencils in another, and a working telephone on the drop leaf. Curiously, they could not find John Goddard's signature anywhere on the desk, though a letter about the sale proves that he made it.

The new owner's name has not been officially disclosed, but in fact he is Robert Bass, of the Texas family of financiers. What pushed the price so high was the interest of the unsuccessful underbidder, Doris Duke, the reclusive seventy-eight-year-old Lucky Strike heiress, who has restored almost a hundred eighteenth-century houses in Newport, and whose Whitehorne Museum there has an extensive collection of Goddard and Townsend furniture. (The Townsends were also local cabinetmakers, and the two families intermarried, producing nineteen cabinetmakers between 1725 and the arrival of machine-made furniture, a century or so later.) Indeed, Miss Duke had occasionally been observed with a tape measure in the Whitehorne Museum, planning a space for the desk that Mr. Bass now owns.

The previous owners of the desk were the Browns of Providence and Newport, a celebrated family of merchants, slave traders, abolitionists, industrialists, and public servants, whose philanthropies have included making gifts to the eponymous Brown University and serving as character witnesses for Claus von Bülow.

The family home in Providence where the desk sat, the Nightingale-Brown house—coincidentally, the largest wooden house built in eighteenth-century America—was donated not long ago to the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization, to which it is adjacent, for use by visiting scholars. The house was in need of almost complete repair, however, and the desk was sold to provide funds for the repairs and for an endowment for the center.

In photographs, the twelve-million-dollar desk, with a carved pediment, or bonnet, on top, seemed tall, massive, and handsome, but the design didn't look very different from a hundred other contemporary pieces and ten thousand reproductions. In order to grasp the secret of its specialness, we decided to drop by Miss Duke's museum and look at the Goddard desks, tables, and bureaus on exhibit there.

Each room at the Whitehorne, when it is not being visited, is shuttered against the light, Ben Reed, the museum's director, explained as he escorted us through the museum. And in each dark room the Goddard furniture, no matter where it was placed, glowed. The wood almost seemed to smile. We began to understand that Goddard's purpose in his carving was not so much to display a design as to reveal the beauty of the wood. Two hundred years of burnishing and natural erosion have only enhanced the glowing effect.

"The desk was a mutual creation of the owner and the builder," Harold Sack, of Israel Sack Inc., told us, back in New York. (It was Mr. Sack who handled the bidding for Mr. Bass.) "The mahogany had probably been collected twenty or thirty years earlier by the Browns during trading trips to the Caribbean, and then was stored until they wanted a desk for something like a son's wedding or coming-of-age.

"The last sale of a Goddard secretary was in 1973, and it went for a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, so any Goddard sold today would achieve a very high price," Mr. Sack said. "But the Brown desk was the last Goddard in private hands, and it was a shock in the antiques world when we heard that it was going to be available. That helped raise the price, but, ultimately, what made this desk worth twelve million dollars was the fact that it's a beautiful American piece. The greatest piece of American furniture."

But why was it left unsigned, in an era when American carpenters and cabinetmakers put their mark on everything from hitching posts to tea caddies? One day in Newport, we discussed this mystery with a young cabinetmaker and boat builder named Jon Heon.

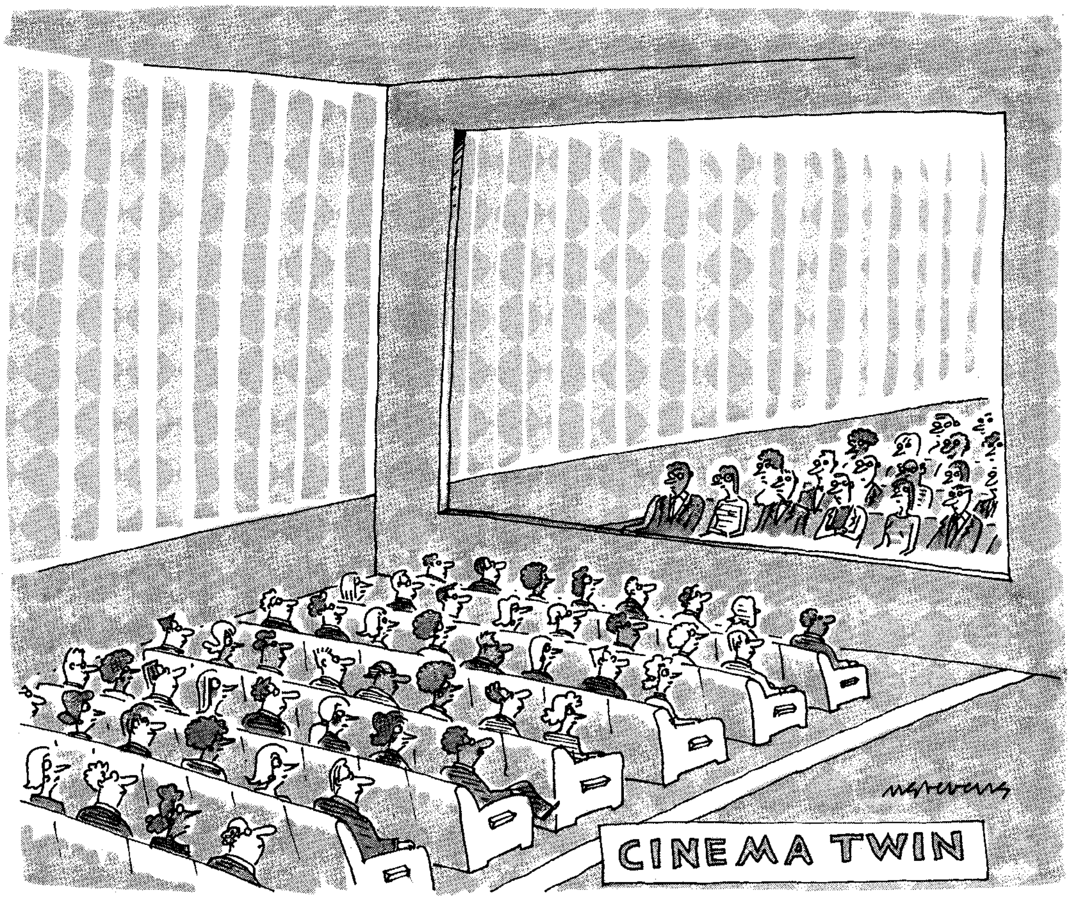
"Oh, I think Goddard was very perturbed about the piece," Mr. Heon said. "That's why he didn't sign it. The lack of a signature suggests to me that he regarded it as a failure. And there's only one way that it could have been a failure to him: he must have bid too low on the job. Every day when he looked at it in the shop, he must have thought that he'd just as soon get it done and get it out, so that he could get back to something profitable. I think when he finished it he hustled it out without bothering to sign it. I can imagine old Goddard yelling, 'Just get it on the wagon and out of here!' There may have been a note of revenge, too, if he felt that the Browns were underpaying him. He knew how great the desk was, and knew that the lack of a signature might eventually lessen its worth. Funny—probably the only man who will ever have lost money on that desk is the man who made it."

Problems

THERE are more Korean dry cleaners in the United States than in Korea. We learned this from Bill Seitz, who teaches a course for Koreans at the New York School of Drycleaning, on East Twenty-seventh Street. He told us that for the past eight or nine years large numbers of Koreans have entered the dry-cleaning industry, because it requires a relatively small capital investment, and because Koreans consider—wrongly, in Mr. Seitz' opinion—that dry cleaning is a business in which there is a minimum of interaction with the customer. The other day, we sat in on the first class of the semester.

"Unfortunately, I don't speak Korean," Mr. Seitz informed his thirty-two Korean students, who were all men. "I apologize. But, fortunately, our good friend Mr. Jesse Hahn will solve that problem."

As Mr. Hahn translated, Mr. Seitz wiped his forehead with a Kleenex. Even though the dryers in the back of the room were not running, the room was very hot.



"The school has been teaching people for over forty years," Mr. Seitz told the class, and Mr. Hahn relayed the information. "In that period of time, we have trained almost twenty thousand people in the art of dry cleaning, spotting, fabrics, management, pressing. There are very few people—successful people—in the dry-cleaning industry who have not come, at one time or another, to school here." He paused.

While Mr. Hahn translated all this, we browsed through "Principles and Practices of Drycleaning," a manual that describes methods for getting rid of melted plastic buttons, fish slime, meat juices, Brandy Alexander, eleven different kinds of ink, eyebrow pencil, airplane glue, library paste, awning drip, nose drops, battery acid, mildew, scorch, and "unidentified."

Mr. Seitz said, "We are very proud that this is the eleventh Korean course here, and that we have trained over three hundred Korean people. No other school in the United States can make this statement."

We read in the manual:

> In 1934 a low priced motor car sold for $600, when the average garment cost $2.50 for good drycleaning. Today that same motor car costs about fifteen times as much but the same quality drycleaning can still be bought for less than double in some areas.

While Mr. Seitz encouraged everyone to take notes and to study them each night, we watched a moth fly toward a closet where dead garments are kept. Dead garments are garments, donated by dry cleaners, that are beyond repair, and that are stained again in the name of dry-cleaning science and used by students to practice on. Sometimes students bring in their own clothes, stained but still wearable. These are live garments.

Mr. Seitz went on, "The other thing that you must do is this: when we talk to you about something that you are not familiar with, you must be willing to ask questions, even if you think that your question is silly or embarrassing."

One of the students raised his hand. Are there other dry-cleaning schools in the United States, he wanted to know. His English was broken but understandable.

"There is one in Silver Spring, Maryland, one in Los Angeles, and one in San Francisco, but you are very lucky, because you have come to the best school of all," said Mr. Seitz.

"Is there a higher level of dry-cleaning course?" the student asked.

"Yes," said Mr. Seitz. "But before we worry about tomorrow let us worry about today. Now, let me tell you a little about myself. I joined the N.C.A.—that's the Neighborhood Cleaners Association—forty years ago, a year after it was founded. I have been in the dry-cleaning business for forty-five years."

"Only forty-five years?" Mr. Hahn asked.

"Still trying to see if I can succeed, Mr. Hahn," said Mr. Seitz. "I have been involved in every aspect of the industry, from scratching paint to spotting to dry cleaning to pressing to managing. So when I show you something, I did not read it in the book. I wrote the book. Big difference."

We turned to the manual, and discovered that one of the simplest methods of identifying a fiber is by burning it. For example, silk or wool fries and sizzles when it is set on fire and smells like burning feathers or hair. Acetate sputters and melts, smells like vinegar, and leaves behind hard black beads of ash that are difficult to crush. When orlon burns, the flame is yellow, the base is purple, the tip is orange, and the smell is acrid.

Ten of the students were already in the dry-cleaning business, it turned out, and Mr. Seitz asked them about their most difficult problems.

"Pressing women's clothes," said one student.

"Snakeskin leather," said another. "And customer relations."

Mr. Seitz listed the problems on a blackboard. "Customer relations," he said. "There are many dry cleaners who speak perfect English and have trouble with customer relations. But you all know that to the extent you learn English it is better for your business. Even though you don't speak much English, certain words you must learn."

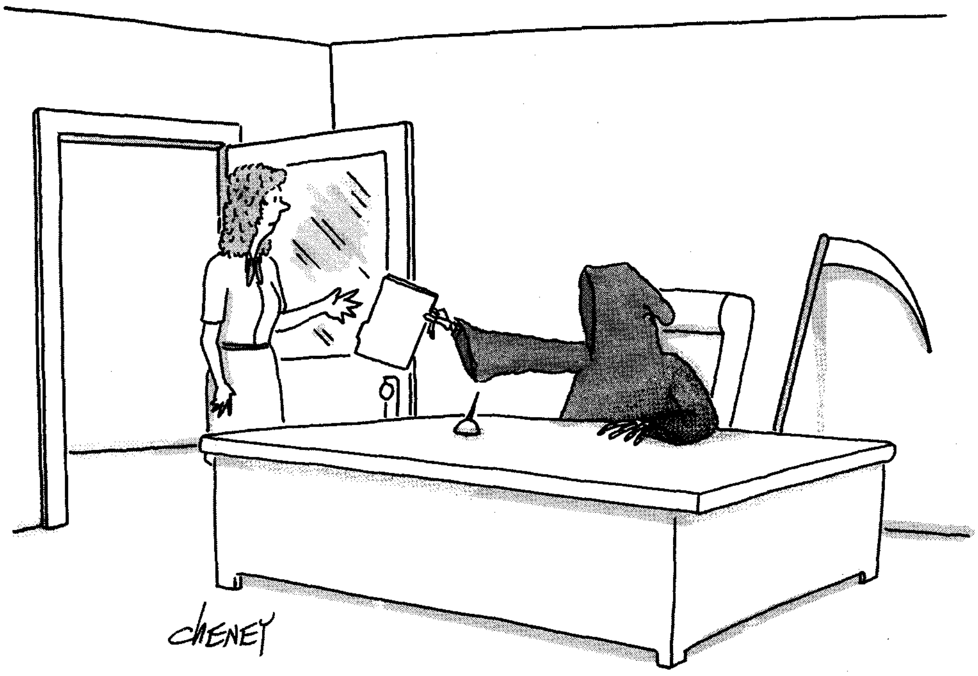
Someone asked Mr. Seitz for examples.

" 'Good morning,' 'good night,' and 'thank you,' " he said, and then he asked if there were any other problems.

A student in the back of the room spoke, in Korean, at length. Mr. Hahn thought for a while, and then said, "Labor." Mr. Seitz wrote the word on the board.

"Label! Label!" corrected Mr. Hahn.

"Labor or label," said Mr. Seitz. "Both are problems."



"Miss Collwood, I've finished with the cold-fusion file. Bring me the file on oat bran."

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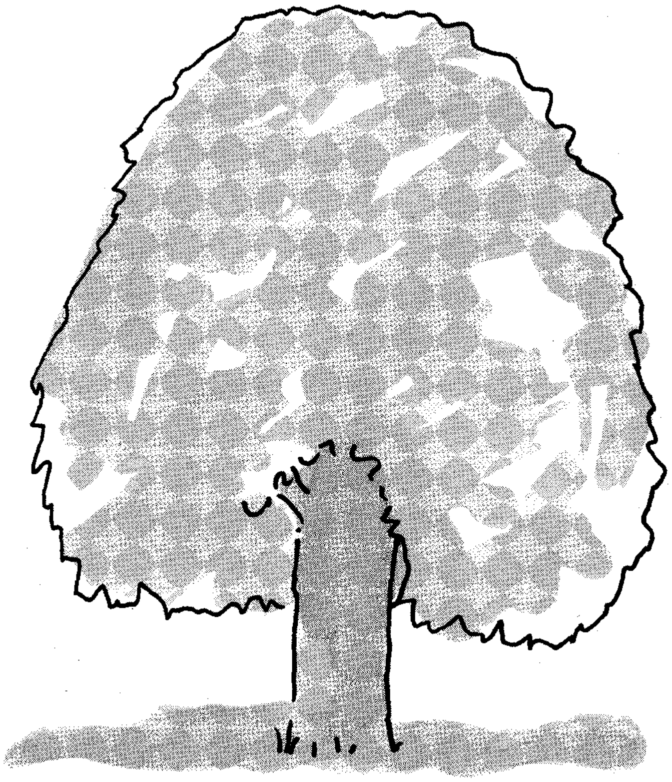
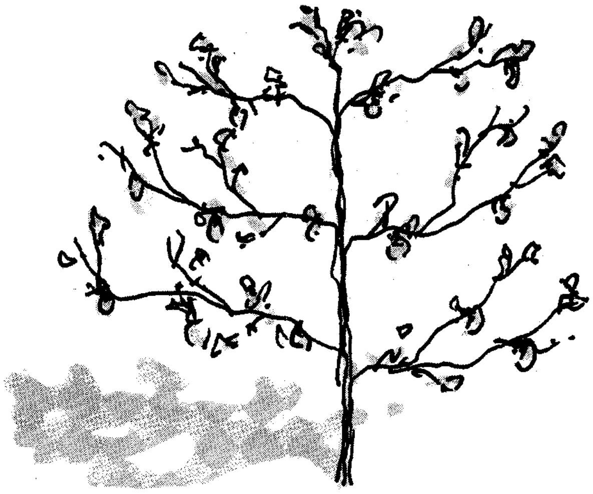
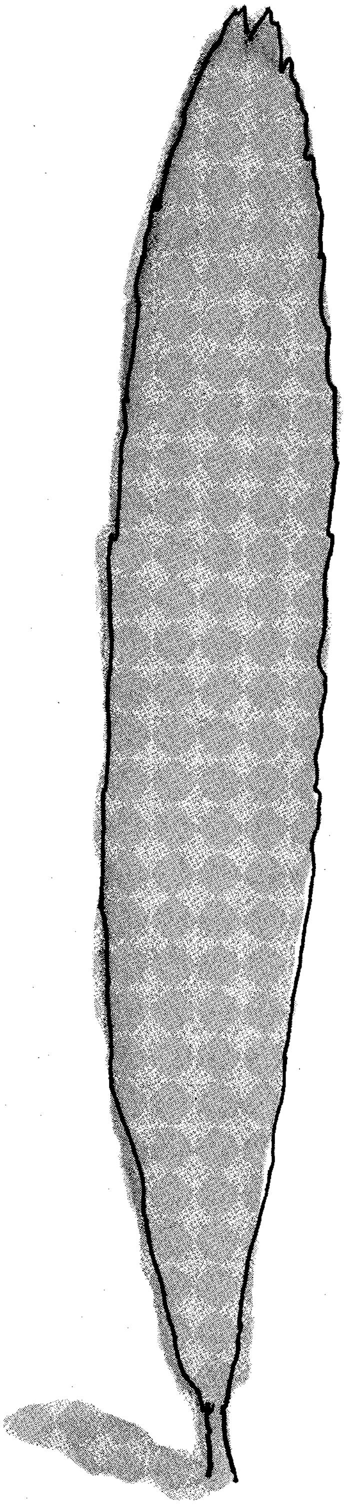
FALL FASHIONS



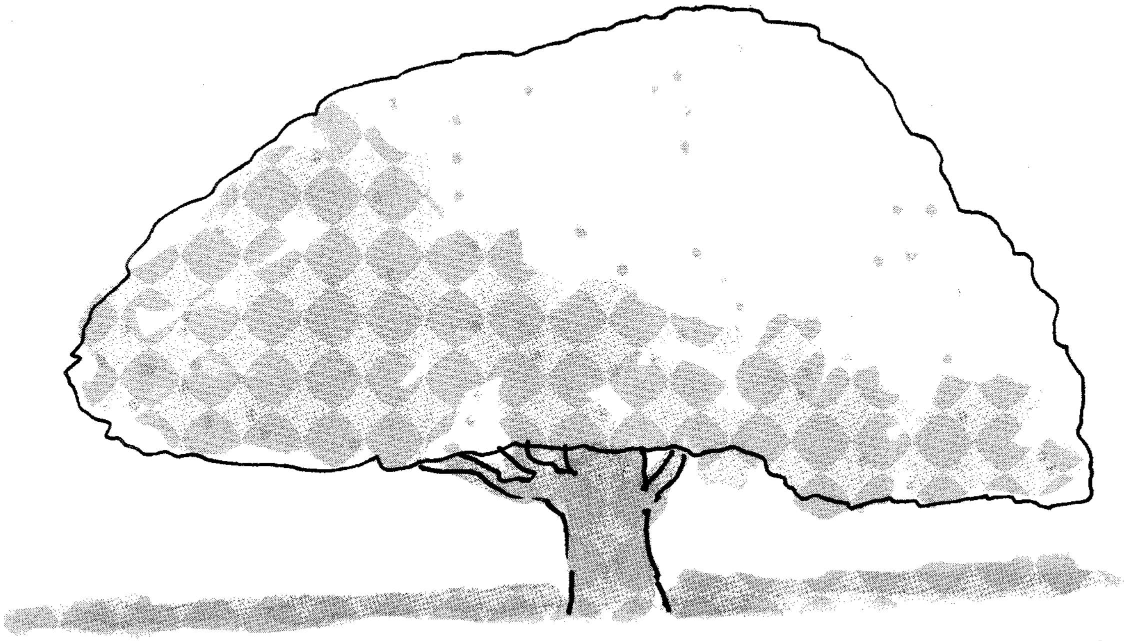
PAULINE TRIGÈRE'S BEECH TREE: A FULL DEEP-PILE CROWN OF GLITTERING COPPER LEAVES OVER A SMOOTH TANK TRUNK IN PEWTER-GRAY BARK.



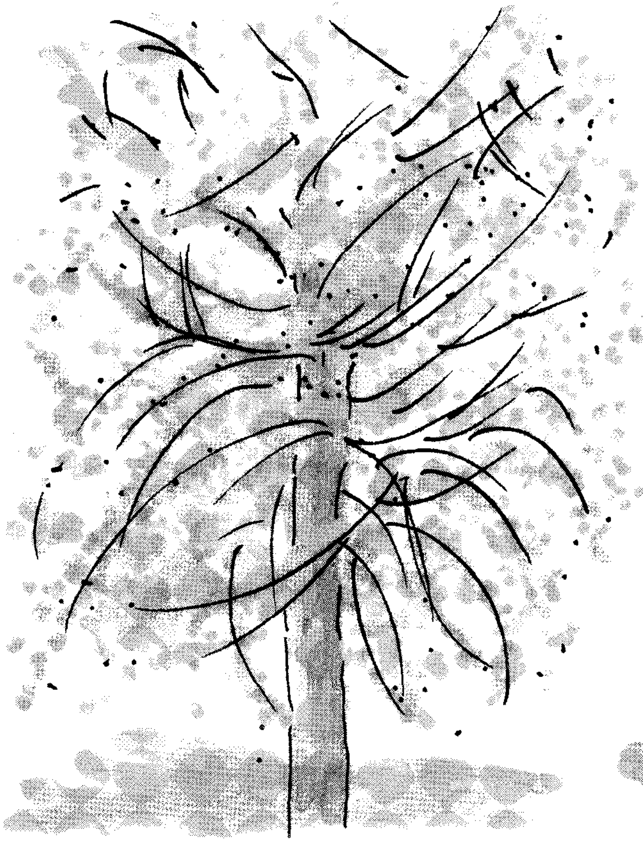
GIANNI VERSACE'S ESPALIERED PEAR: A SHORT, MINIMALIST, STRAPLESS TREE WITH LEAF- & FRUIT-ENCRUSTED BRANCHES & A MATCHING MOCK-CROC TRUNK.



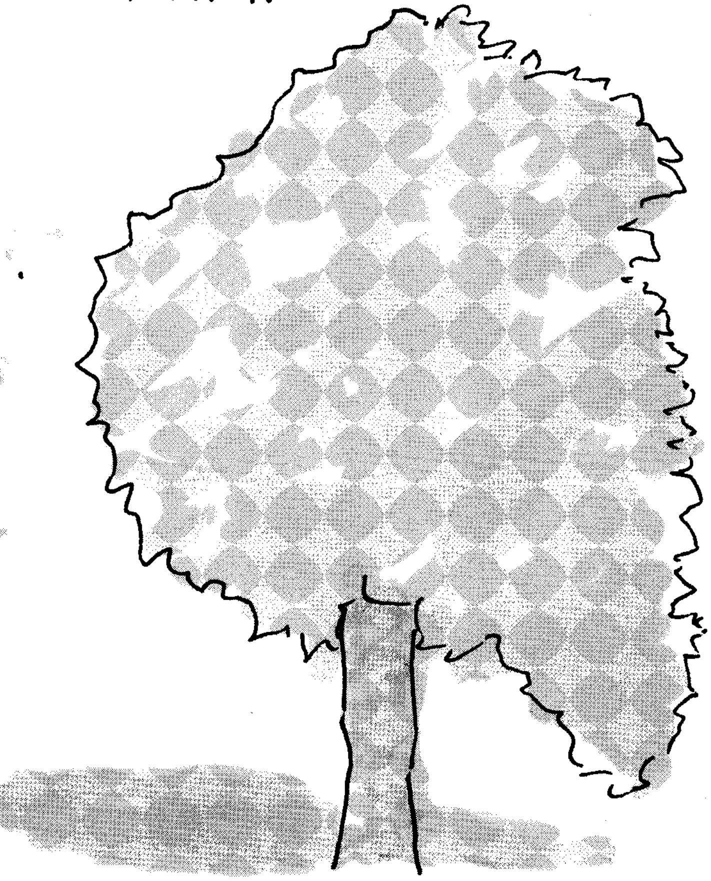
DONNA KARAN'S CYPRESS: A SLEEK, SEASONLESS STRETCH "TREE SUIT" IN MIDNIGHT BORDEAUX OVER A SHORT CAMEL-BROWN "CIGARETTE" TRUNK.



CHARLOTTE NEUVILLE'S PARASOL PINE: OVERSIZED "BOYFRIEND" CROWN IN A PLUSH TAPESTRY OF PINE NEEDLES & MUTED-CARAMEL CONES OVER A WHIPCORD CINNAMON-BARK TRUNK.



BOB MACKIE'S GINKGO: A DRAMATIC TOP OF LONG, CURVY BRANCHES FRINGED IN ACID-YELLOW, FAN-SHAPED LEAVES OVER A TIGHT TRUNK IN MATTE-UMBER BARK.



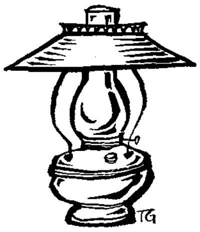
TAI & ROSITA MISSONI'S PLANE TREE: A LOOSE, LOPSIDED, VIBRANT DUFFEL CROWN OF GREEN & GOLD LEAVES DRAPED CASUALLY OVER A SLENDER TRUNK MOTTLED IN GINGER & SAGE.

CRAWFORD

THE TONGUE

At fourteen I had discovered that a tongue had no real taste. I was sucking the tongue of a boy named Tanner, and I was sucking his tongue because I had liked the way his fingers looked on the keys of the piano as he played it, and I had liked the way he looked from the back as he walked across the pasture, and also, when I was close to him, I liked the way behind his ears smelled. Those three things had led to my standing in his sister's room (she was my best friend), my back pressed against the closed door, sucking his tongue. Someone should have told me that there were other things to seek out in a tongue than the flavor of it, for then I would not have been standing there sucking on poor Tanner's tongue as if it were an old Frozen Joy with all its flavor run out and nothing left but the ice. As I was sucking away, I was thinking, Taste is not the thing to seek out in a tongue; how it makes you feel—that is the thing. I used to like to eat boiled cow's tongue served in a sauce of lemon juice, onions, cucumber, and pepper; but cow's tongue has no real taste either. It was the sauce that made the cow's tongue so delicious to eat.

At the time I was thinking of Tanner's tongue, I was sitting at the dining table with Miriam, the youngest of Lewis and Mariah's four children, feeding her a bowl of stewed plums and yogurt specially prepared for her by her mother. She did not like this, and so to make her eat I told her that she was not really eating stewed fruit and yogurt but a special food that grew in wildflowers and was very much sought after by fairies. I told her that if she ate enough of it, eventually she would be able to see things that other people could not see. This was just the sort of thing my mother used to say to me when I would not eat my food, and just as I did not believe my mother, Miriam did not believe me; she ate, but it was a long, drawn-out process, just as it was a long, drawn-out process when my mother used to feed me. It was in those times when my mother used to feed me that I first began to notice her, really notice her, as if she were a specimen laid out in front of me. I was not Miriam's mother, and, in fact, whenever I fed her and told her these stories, a sort of bribe to get her to do things my way, I always did it in a low voice, so that Mariah would not overhear. Mariah did not believe in this way of doing things. She thought that with children sincerity and straightforwardness, the truth as unvarnished as possible, was the best way. She thought fairy tales were a bad idea, especially ones involving princesses who were awakened from long sleeps upon being kissed by a prince; apparently stories like that would give the children, all girls, the wrong idea about what to expect in the world when they grew up. Her speech on fairy tales always amused me, because I had in my head a long list of things that contributed to wrong expectations in the world, and somehow fairy tales did not make an appearance on it.



We were in the house on the Great Lake, the house where Mariah had spent her summers when she was a child and where now, with her husband and children, she spent her summers as an adult. We had all come here right after the children's summer holidays began. From where Miriam and I sat at the dining table, we could see Mariah standing over the kitchen sink. The dining room and kitchen were all part of the same enormous room, and we were far enough away from Mariah so that if we talked softly all she could hear was our muffled voices. She stood in front of the sink, studying some herbs she had grown in pots on the windowsill. The sun came in through the window, but only as far as the faucets, so that Mariah was in the semidark, looking at the plants in the sun. What Miriam might have seen was her beautiful golden mother pouring love over growing things, a most familiar sight to her five-year-old eyes; but what I saw was a hollow old woman, all the blood drained out of her face, her bony nose bonier than ever, her mouth collapsed as if all the muscles had been removed, as if it would never break out in a smile again. Mariah was forty years old. She kept saying it—"I am forty years old"—alternating between surprise and foreboding. I did not understand why she felt that way about her age, old and unloved; a sadness for her overcame me, and I almost started to cry—I had grown to love her so.

But then Lewis bounded into the room. Lewis was a lawyer, and I suppose that's why he was always reading something carefully. Now he carried in his hand a large newspaper, the pages parted to the financial section; either he had just gotten off the telephone after having a chat with his stockbroker or he would soon do so. He made a mock animal sound to Miriam and waved the newspaper at me, and he walked over to Mariah and embraced her from behind and licked the side of her neck with his tongue. She leaned her head backward and rested it on his shoulder (she was a little shorter than he, and that looked so wrong; it looks better when a woman is a little taller than her husband), and she sighed and shuddered in pleasure. The whole thing had an air of untruth about it; they didn't mean to do what they were doing at all. It was a show—not for anyone else's benefit, but a show for each other. And how did I know this? I just could tell—that it was a show and not something to be trusted.

I did not feel that I knew Lewis well at all, and I did not want to. I liked him; he told me jokes, he liked to make me laugh. I think he felt sorry for me, because I was so far away from home and all alone. Whenever he heard me speak of my family with bitterness, he said that I spoke about them in that way because I really missed them. He spoke to his own mother every day, but I could not tell if he really liked her. Sometimes he treated me as if I were another one of his daughters, and he would tell me fantastic stories just to see my face as it formed in belief and then fell apart in disbelief. If I said something he thought interesting, he would ask me all sorts of questions and then later bring me books, books that I did not even know existed. He surpassed the usual standard of handsomeness, and his features in profile looked as if they belonged on a coin or a stamp. What was nice about Lewis was that he did not draw your attention to how handsome he was; he didn't draw attention to anything about him. This was a nice trait in a man, and I made a note of it right away. I was not in love with him, nor did I have a crush

"I SENT THIS TO YOU THROUGH THE MAIL TO SAY I HOPE YOUR DAY IS SWELL." WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
TECHNICALLY, IT'S A NEAR RHYME.
NEAR ONLY COUNTS IN HORSESHOES AND HAND GRENADES.

on him. My sympathies were with Mariah. It was my mother who had told me that I should never take a man's side over a woman's; by that she meant I should never have feelings of possession for another woman's husband. It was from her own experience that she spoke—the experience of having women who had loved my father, and whose love he had not returned, try to kill her, while they left my father without so much as a singed hair on his head.

After Lewis licked Mariah's neck and she leaned against him and sighed and shuddered at the same time, they both just stood there, as if stuck together. It was one of those times when you know the events of a lifetime are passing through a person's mind. It's possible that they were thinking about the same things; it's possible that in thinking about the same things they even came to the same conclusions. But to look at them, they seemed as if they couldn't be more apart if they were on separate planets. The room was not exactly filled with silence; I was still feeding Miriam and had just told her that her bowl of stewed fruit and yogurt was really a "potage," and she seemed to like the word as much as I did when at five years old I first found it on a bottle of Marmite. But when the phone rang we all jumped, for the noise filled up the room and had the quality of an alarm, as if warning us to leave the building quick. It was Mariah's best friend, Dinah, reminding her to come to a picnic in honor of some endangered marshland. It must have been my age, but I could see no reason to be so worked up over a thing like that.

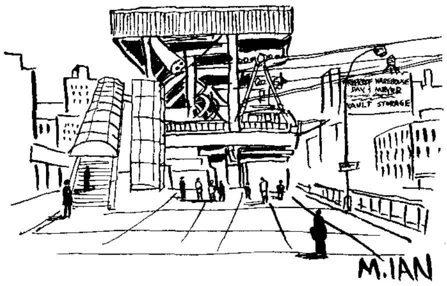
For a long time I had understood that a sigh and shudder was an appropriate response to a tongue passing along the side of your neck. After I could find nothing unusual in sucking on Tanner's tongue, I noticed that his hands on my breasts, first rubbing delicately and then very hard, produced an exciting feeling. I do not remember how I knew to do this, but I pressed his head down to my chest, and as he licked and sucked my breasts, I thought, This must never stop. At the time, my breasts were the size of droppers, the small dumplings my mother would put in pumpkin soup, but they felt as if they took up my whole body. I thought I could only have this feeling with Tanner. I had to be careful when I thought of his lips on my breasts, for just that, a thought, would make me forget what I was doing. I would sit at my desk in school, I would lie in my bed at night, I would walk down the street, and all the time I would go over and over, very slowly, the times Tanner's mouth would crawl back and forth across my chest. Then I began to think not just of Tanner's mouth on my breasts but other boys' also. One Saturday afternoon I was in the library behind a tin cupboard, looking at some old periodicals that contained articles I needed to read for a botany class. A boy I knew very vaguely—his mother and mine were in the same churchwomen's fellowship—had been sitting at a table nearby, and suddenly he got up, walked over to me, and pressed his lips against mine, hard, so hard that it caused me to feel pain, as if he wanted to leave an imprint. I had two reactions at once: I liked it, and I didn't like it. But after he pulled his head away I did the same thing to him, only now I placed my tongue inside his mouth. The whole thing was more than he had bargained for, and he had to carry his schoolbag in such a way as to hide the mess in the front of his trousers. We met this way for a few Saturday afternoons, but he wore his hair in a pompadour style, imitating a popular singer of the time, a singer I did not at all care for, and I eventually found the smell of the brilliantine he wore to keep his hair in place unpleasant. It ended just as it began, without words. I stopped showing up at the library on Saturday afternoons, and when we passed each other on the street he never stopped to ask me why.

THE day we arrived at the lake was a very hot day—unusual, everyone said, for that time of year; but for the first time since I had left home I felt happy. It had been six months now, and I felt strongly that I never wanted to see that place again, but if for some reason I was forced to live there again, I would never accept the harsh judgments made against me by people whose only power to do so was that they had known me from the moment I was born. I had also grown to love the idea of seasons: winter, spring, summer, and autumn. What wonderful names—and, as far as I could see, appropriate. The heat of summer was different from the heat I was used to. That heat made everything in its path long for the shade; the sun was always overhead, as if you might reach up and touch it. It was a heat that bore down on you like a warning or a punishment, and made you feel you were suffering for sins too numerous to count. But this new heat seemed blessed; it was a conversation piece; it was a contrast to the six months just past. And the days were so long. I was not used to seeing the sun set after eight o'clock and dusk lasting for over an hour after that. It was as if the earth were a character with many different personalities.

Each day, after breakfast, at around ten o'clock or so, the children—Louisa, May, Jane, and Miriam—and I would set out for the lake. I would make a lunch for us, sandwiches, and we would walk there in our bathing suits and shirts—a long walk through a thickly wooded area. The ground was uneven, sometimes going up, sometimes going down, and always we met a congregation of biting insects. The children were used to it, but I was not, and I would complain from beginning to end, coming and going. We could have driven to the lake, but I could not drive. Mariah had specifically requested a girl who could swim and drive a car; but through the correspondence that served as an interview she had got to like me so much that she thought we could work around it.

I carried Miriam on my back. She hated the walk, and after going a short way she looked so miserable that I would give her a ride on my back. I loved Miriam from the moment I met her. She was the first person I had loved in a very long while, and I did not know why. I loved the way she smelled, and I used to sit her on my lap with my head bent over her and breathe her in. She must have reminded me of myself when I was that age, for I treated her the way I remembered my mother treating me then. When I heard her cry out at night, I didn't mind at all getting up to comfort her, and if she didn't want to be alone I would bring her into bed with me; this always seemed to make her feel better, and she would clasp her little arms around my neck as she went back to sleep. Whenever I was away from them, she was the person I missed and thought of all the time. I couldn't explain it. I loved this little girl. And so I didn't mind carrying her through the woods, all forty pounds of her, for fifteen minutes.

I hated walking through the woods; it was gloomy and damp, for the sun could hardly shine through the tops of the trees. Without wanting to, I would imagine that there was someone or something where there was nothing. I was reminded of home. I was reminded that I came from a place where there was no such thing as the "real" thing, because often what seemed to be one thing turned out to be altogether different. When I was at an age where I could still touch my mother with ease, I used to like to sit in her lap and caress a large scar she had on the right side of her face, at the place where her temple and hairline met. When she was a girl growing up in the country, she had to walk a long distance to school, going through part of a rain forest and crossing two small rivers. One day, on her way home, while going through the rain forest, she saw a monkey sitting in a tree. She did not like the way the monkey stared at her, and so she picked up a stone and threw it at the monkey. The stone missed, because the monkey shifted out of its way. This went on for a few days: she passed the monkey and felt that she did not like the way it stared at her, she threw a stone at it, the monkey shifted and missed being struck. One day when she threw the stone, the monkey caught it and threw it back. When the stone struck my mother, the blood poured out of her as if she were not a human being but a goblet with no bottom to it. Everyone thought that she might not stop bleeding until she died, and then that it was a miracle she survived, though the truth lay in her own mother's skill at dealing with such events. That was just one of many stories I knew about walking through places where trees live, and none of them had a happy outcome. And so as soon as we started our walk through the woods I would strike up a conversation—either with the children or, if they were not interested, with myself. Eventually I got so used to being afraid to walk through the woods that I did it by myself and began to see that there was something beautiful about it; and I had one more thing to add to my expanding world.



When the children and I got to the lake, we would run into the water to cool ourselves off. We would then explore various parts of the beach, eat our lunch, play in the water; I would read

ALL SOULS'

Suppose there is no Heaven and no Hell,
And that the dead can never leave the earth,
That, as the body rots, the soul breaks free,
Weak and disabled in its second birth.

And then, invisible, rising to the light,
Each finds a world it cannot touch or hear,
Where colors fade and, if the soul cries out,
The silence stays unbroken in the air.

How flat the ocean seems without its roar,
Without the sting of salt, the bracing gust.
The sunset blurs into a grayish haze.
The morning snowfall is a cloud of dust.

The pines that they revisit have no scent.
They cannot feel the needled forest floor.
Crossing the stream, they watch the current flow
Unbroken as they step down from the shore.

They want their voices to become the wind—
Intangible like them—to match its cry,
Howling in treetops, covering the moon,
Tumbling the storm clouds in a rain-swept sky.

But they are silent as a rising mist,
A smudge of smoke dissolving in the air.
They watch the shadows lengthen on the grass.
The pallor of the rose is their despair.

—DANA GIOIA

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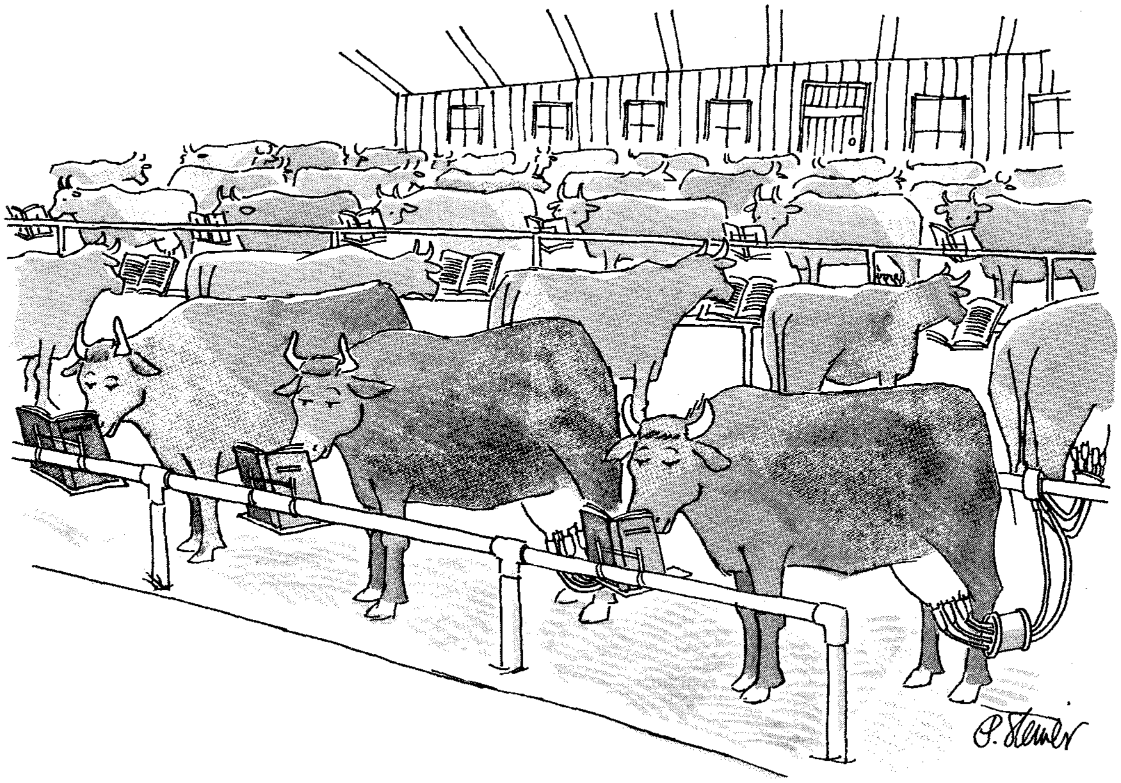


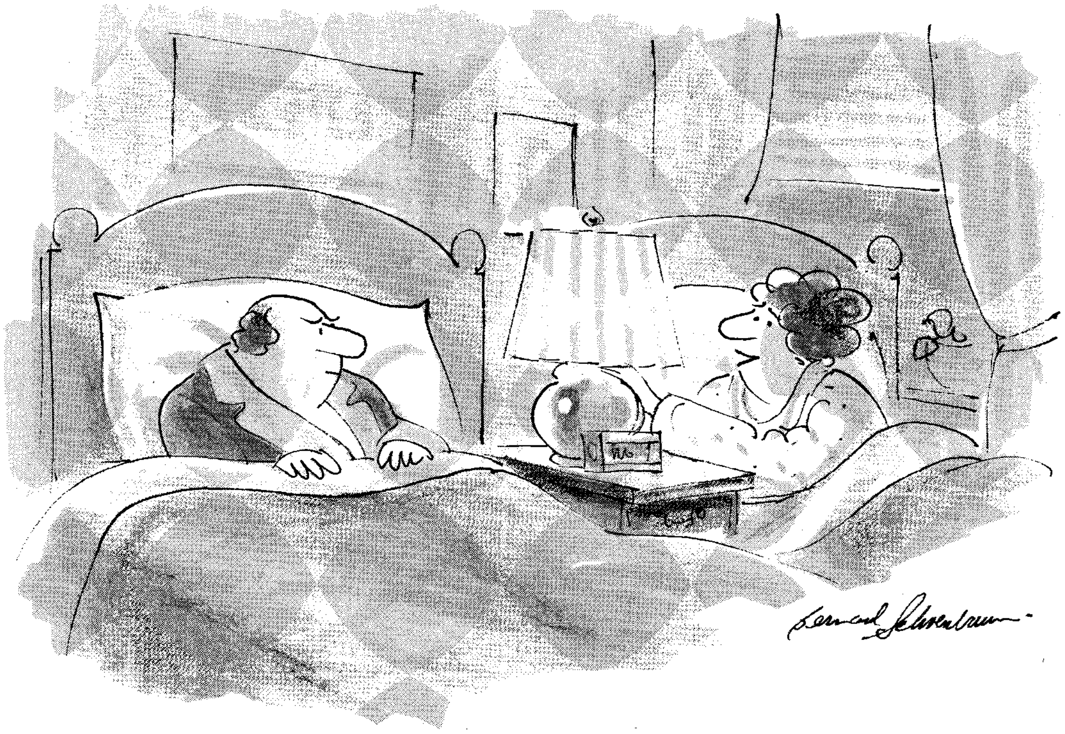
to them. Not long after we started our daily routine of going to the lake, we were sitting in the shade of a bush I did not know the name of, looking at people going by. Louisa and May made up stories about them as they passed; the stories were all about what the passerby's life would be like as a certain sort of dog. They were such imaginative and funny stories that I laughed until my jaws ached. We saw a woman coming toward us; she had long black hair that kept falling into her face, and she kept pushing it back with both her hands. They decided she was a Labrador and started to say things about "Labbie." As the woman got closer, we saw that it was their mother's best friend, Dinah. We all started to laugh at the mistake, and Dinah, seeing us, thought it was the pleasure of seeing her that made us laugh so. She was that sort of person—someone who thought her presence made other people beside themselves with happiness.

I had met Dinah the night after we arrived here on our holiday, and I did not like her. This was because the first thing she said to me when Mariah introduced us was "So you are from the islands?" I don't know why, but the way she said it made a fury rise up in me. I was about to respond to her in this way: "Which islands exactly do you mean? The Hawaiian Islands? The islands that make up Indonesia, or what?" And I was going to say it in a voice designed to make her feel uneasy. But Mariah, who by then knew me so well, started to clear her throat loudly, as if a frog the size of a moon was caught in it. Later, when Mariah and I were having our before-we-turn-in conversation, she expressed the hope that I would like Dinah. She said Dinah was a wonderful person—so giving, so full of love. She said, "What I like the most about Dinah is how she embraces life." And this almost rushed out of me: "Yes, you mean your life. She embraces your life." But I caught myself, for if Mariah had asked me what I meant I would not have been able to explain. I did not like the kind of women Dinah reminded me of. She was very beautiful and it mattered a great deal to her. Among the beliefs I held about the world was that being beautiful should not matter to a woman, because it was one of those things that would go away—your beauty would go away, and there wouldn't be anything you could do to bring it back. I could see that Dinah was attached to her beauty: she stroked her hair, from the crown of her head all the way down, constantly; she would put her hands to her mouth, not in modesty but as a gesture to draw attention to her lips, which were perfectly shaped, the sort of lips used in advertisements for lipstick. I did not like this kind of woman, but it only showed what a superior person Mariah was that she saw in Dinah not a woman who envied her but a friend full of goodness and love.

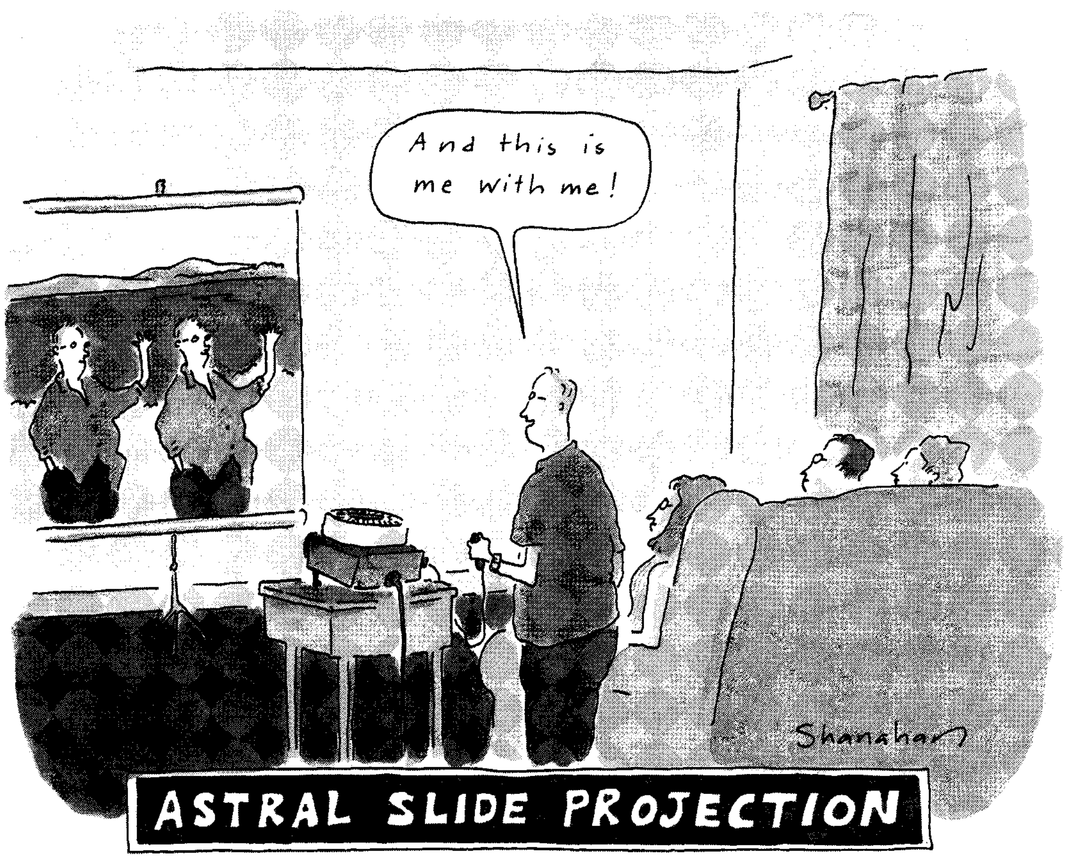
Dinah now showered the children with affection—ruffling hair, pinching cheeks, picking Miriam up out of my lap, and ignoring me. To a person like Dinah, someone in my position is "the girl"—as in "the girl who takes care of the children." It would never have occurred to her that I had sized her up immediately, that I viewed her as a cliché, a something not to be, a something to rise above, a something I was very familiar with: a woman in love with another woman's life, not in a way that inspires imitation but in a way that inspires envy. I had to laugh. She had her own husband, she had her own children (two boys, two girls), she had her own house in the city and one on the lake—she had the same things Mariah had, and still she liked Mariah's things better. How to account for that.

THE times that I loved Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother. The times that I did not love Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother. She was standing at the kitchen table, a table she had found in an old farmhouse in Finland when she accompanied Lewis on a business trip to Scandinavia and liked so much that she bought it and had it shipped back home (when she told me this, it amazed me to think that someone could find an old piece of kitchen furniture at the other end of the world and like it so much they would go to so much trouble to make sure it was always in their possession), surrounded by enormous blooms of pink and white flowers. I was supposed to be upstairs giving the children their baths, but seeing Mariah look so beautiful, I couldn't tear myself away. How many times had I seen my mother surrounded by plants of one kind or another, arranging them into some pattern, training them to grow a certain way; and they were the only times I can remember my mother serene, motionless, for she had the ability to appear to be moving even though she was standing still. Mariah reminded me more and more of the parts of my mother that I loved. Her hands were just like my mother's—large, with long fingers and square fingernails; their hands looked like instruments for arranging things beautifully. Sometimes, when they wished to make a point, they would hold their hands in the air, and suddenly their hands were vessels made for carrying something special; at other times their hands made you think they excelled at playing some musical instrument, though in fact the two of them were dunces at anything musical. Mariah, now mistaking my intense study of her for curiosity about the flowers, held them up in the crystal vase in which they were arranged and said, "Peonies—aren't they gorgeous?" I agreed that they were and said I did not know a climate like this could produce flowers that bloomed like that, bloomed with such abandon, as if there were no tomorrow. Mariah placed the flowers before me and told me to smell them. I did, and I told her that this smell made you want to lie down naked and cover your body with these petals so you could smell this way forever. When I said this, Mariah opened her eyes wide and drew in her breath in a mock-schoolmistress way, and then she laughed so hard she had to put the vase of flowers down, for she was afraid she would break it. This was the sort of time I wished I could have had with my mother, but it was not allowed.

BEFORE we came to the lake, Mariah had worried that I would be lonely, that I would feel isolated, that I would miss my friend Peggy. She did not like Peggy. Peggy smoked cigarettes, used slang, wore very tight jeans, did not comb her hair properly or often, wore shiny fake-snakeskin boots, and generally had such an air of mystery that it made people who did not know her well nervous. I had met Peggy in the park once when I was taking Miriam for a walk. Peggy was with her cousin, also an au pair, a girl from Ireland. Peggy hated her cousin and only saw her because of family obligation. They were opposites; the cousin was someone who thought a good outward appearance and proper behavior should carry the day. I had seen the cousin a few times with the children she took care of; immediately recognizing each other as foreigners, we tried to form a friendship. It was not a success. Only after Peggy described her to me did I see why. The funny thing was that Peggy and I were not alike, either, but that is just what we liked about each other; what we didn't have in common were things we approved of anyway. She hated to read even a newspaper. She hated sunlight and wore sunshades all the time, even at night and indoors. She hated children and had nothing but hatred and scorn to heap on her own childhood. She hated silence, and she hated sitting still and looking at nothing in particular. She lived at home with her mother and father, and she said that I could never meet them because they were extremely stupid and hated everyone who did not come from Ireland or someplace near there. She carried in her wallet a photograph of three sisters, singers in a group. I could see that she wanted to look like them: always posing her mouth in a pout, trying to give the same impression of a difficult and hard-to-please woman. But she wasn't a singer, and she wasn't difficult or hard to please. She worked for the government, in the motor-registry department, stamping approval or disapproval on documents as they passed her way. She lived far from the city where I lived with Mariah and Lewis, and where she worked, so she had to travel by train every day. When I first saw her, she was standing off to one side, apart from everybody, her shoulders hitched up and bent, sucking in heavily the smoke of a Lucky Strike cigarette. I recognized the cigarettes instantly, for they were the same sort my father smoked. I had never seen anyone female smoke this kind of cigarettes before. It was something I had always wanted to do, and so I started to smoke them also. When her cousin introduced us, she had lowered her sunshades down her nose and looked over them at me. She said, "Hi," and it sounded strange, as



"It's the end of another campaign day, dear. Any closing statements?"


And this is me with me!
Shanahan

ASTRAL SLIDE PROJECTION

if her voice box were covered over with cobwebs. She started to tell me about a trip she had just taken to California, and then in the middle of it she stopped and said, "You're not from Ireland, are you? You talk funny." And I laughed and laughed, because in a long time that was the funniest thing anyone had said to me. We exchanged telephone numbers, and after that we spoke to each other at least once a day, sometimes more. We saw each other every weekend and sometimes during the week. We told each other everything, even when we knew that the other didn't quite understand what was really meant.

This new friendship of mine drove Mariah crazy. She couldn't tell me what to do, exactly, because she wasn't my parent, but she gave me lectures about what a bad influence a person like Peggy could be. She said that Peggy was never to come to the house and should never be around the children. But one weekend, a Saturday night, after Peggy and I had been carousing around town, going to movies and visiting record stores and buying marijuana and smoking it by ourselves because all the boys we saw we thought were too dangerous to go home with, she missed the last train of the night and so had to sleep with me in my room. I could have asked her to leave early in the morning, before Mariah could find out she was there, but I didn't. I told Mariah about Peggy's missing her train, and Mariah said, "I guess you like Peggy a lot, and, you know, you really should have a friend." This was a way in which Mariah was superior to my mother, for my mother would never come to see that perhaps my needs were more important than her wishes.

Now I missed Peggy, especially from early evening until I went to bed. We tried to talk every day—she would call from her office, on the government telephone—but it wasn't the same. Mariah, noticing how I felt, thought it would be good for me to meet people—her friends and their children who were my age. Mariah and Lewis gave a party.

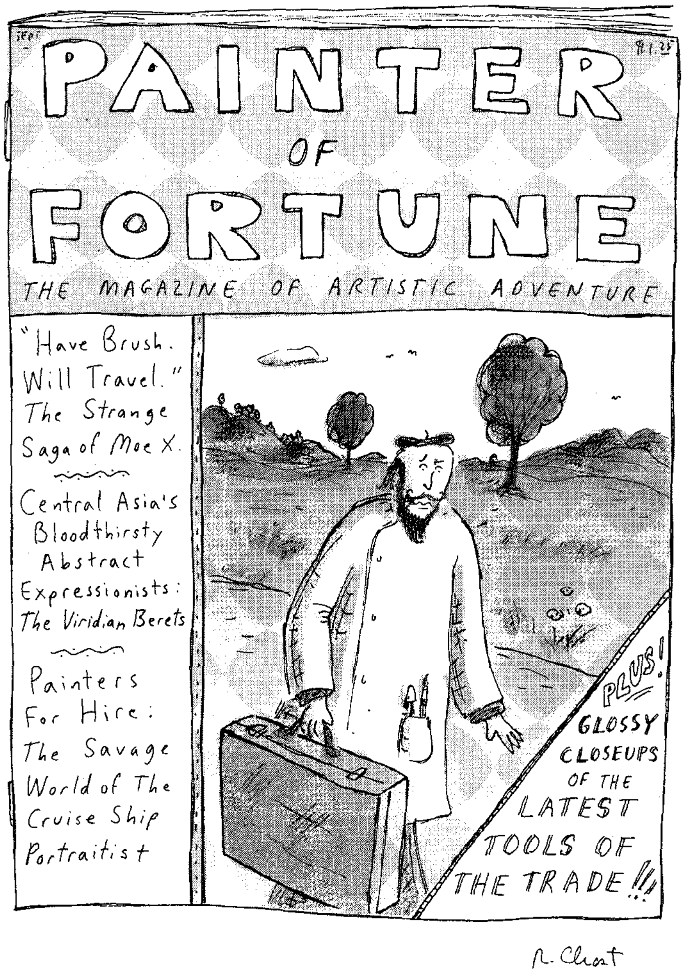
One of my pastimes at home, my old home, had been to sit and look through a catalogue from which, each year, my father ordered a new felt hat and a pair of dress shoes. In the catalogue were pictures of clothes on mannequins, but the mannequins had no heads or limbs, only torsos. I used to wonder what face would fit on the torso I was looking at, how such a face would look as it broke out in a smile, how it would look back at me if suddenly we were introduced. Now I knew, for these people, all standing there, holding drinks in their hands, reminded me of the catalogue; their clothes, their features, the manner in which they carried themselves were the example all the world should copy. They had names like Peters, Smith, Jones, and Richards—names that were easy on the tongue. They had somehow all been to the islands—by that, they meant the place where I was from—and had fun there. I decided not to like them just on that basis; I wished once again that I came from a place where no one wanted to go, a place that was filled with slag and unexpectedly erupting volcanoes, or where a visitor was turned into a pebble on setting foot there; somehow it made me ashamed to come from a place where the only thing to be said about it was "I had fun when I was there." Dinah came with her husband and her brother, and it was her brother that Mariah had really wanted me to meet. She had said that he was three years older than I was, that he had just returned from a year of travelling in Africa and Asia, and that he was awfully worldly and smart. She did not say he was handsome, and when I first saw him I couldn't tell, either; but when we were introduced, the first thing he said to me was "Where in the West Indies are you from?" and that is how I came to like him in an important way.

His name was Hugh. I liked the sound of his voice, not because it reminded me of anything in particular—I just liked it. I liked his eyes—they were a plain brown. I liked his mouth and imagined it kissing me everywhere; it was just an ordinary mouth. I liked his hands and imagined them caressing me everywhere; they were not unusual in any way. His hair lay on his head unevenly, like pieces of mercerized cotton cut at random lengths, and it was the color of a warm brown coat. He was about five inches shorter than I was, and I especially liked that. He smelled like sandalwood. I knew this smell because my father had a shaving cream that he used on Sundays, and it was the same scent. As soon as we met, we spoke only to each other. We said nothing that left a lasting impression. Eventually, we were sitting on grass behind a huge hedge of wild roses, away from everybody. For a long time we said nothing, and then Hugh said, "Isn't it the most blissful thing in the world to be away from everything you have ever known—to be so far away that you don't even know yourself anymore and you're not sure you ever want to come back to all the things you're a part of?" I knew so just what he meant, and it made me sigh and press myself against him as if he were the last thing in the world. He kissed me on my face and ears and neck and in my mouth. If I enjoyed myself beyond anything I had known so far, it must have been because such a long time had passed since I had been touched in that way by anyone; it must have been because I was so far from home. I was not in love.

We were still lying on the grass. We had no clothes on. It had gotten quite dark, but the air was still very hot. The wild roses perfumed the air in a sickly but delicious way. I was feeling that I was made up only of good things when suddenly I remembered that I had forgotten to protect myself, something Mariah had told me over and over that I must remember to do. She had taken me to her own doctor, and every time I left the house on an outing with Peggy, Mariah would remind me to make sure I used the things he had given me. My period was due in two weeks, and the thought that it might not show up made me stiffen suddenly. I felt like running, running for the two weeks; at the end of this time, either my period would show up or I would die from exhaustion. I shivered so hard that Hugh noticed and said, "What's the matter?" and pulled me back down next to him. He buried his face in the hair under my arms; he took first one breast, then the other into his mouth as if he meant to swallow them whole. He meant to make me feel again the thing that had just happened between us, but now I was only reminded of my past, filled with confusion and dread.

When I was around twelve years old or so, I was given three yards of cloth as a present. It was an ugly piece of cloth; it had printed on it a design of brown boxes with the word "Pandora" written across each one and a black-haired beast emerging from the open lid. With my mother's permission, I had it made up in a dress not appropriate to wear to church: no sleeves and a boat neck. One day I was putting on that dress, and while my arms were raised high above my head I saw this amazing thing—a brownish, curly patch of hair growing under each arm. I was amazed at this sign of something I thought would never happen to me, a sign that certain parts of my life could no longer be kept secret from my mother, or people in general; anyone could look at me and know things about me. I got a washrag and rubbed hard under my arms, but the hair just stayed there; it would not go away. I had known that, but I could not prevent myself from trying. I then thought that if I had hair growing in one place, perhaps I had hair growing in other places also, and I put my hands in my underpants and felt. My worst fears were true; I had hair growing there also—a patch of small, short curls, like a baby's head. Sometimes, when I would find myself in a mess that left me very disturbed, I would say to myself, I am going to wake up now, and I would wake. This was not a dream; this was my real life. I was undergoing a change, and there was nothing I could do to stop it. Not long after, I was about to take my bath in preparation for school. I had been feeling odd while going about my morning chores, and had complained to my mother about an ache in my stomach and a chill. I got undressed for my bath. I removed my underpants. My underpants were stained with a rust color, but I didn't recognize this color as blood. It frightened me all the same, and I immediately cried out for my mother to come and help me. When she saw my predicament, she laughed and laughed. It was a kind laugh, a reassuring laugh. And then she said that finding blood in my underpants might be something one day I would get down on my knees and pray for.

I did not spend the next two weeks worrying about my period. If it did not show up, there was no question in my mind that I would force it to do so. I knew how to do this. Without telling me exactly how I might miss a menstrual cycle, my mother had shown me which herbs to pick and boil, and what time of day to drink the potion they produced, to bring on a reluctant pe-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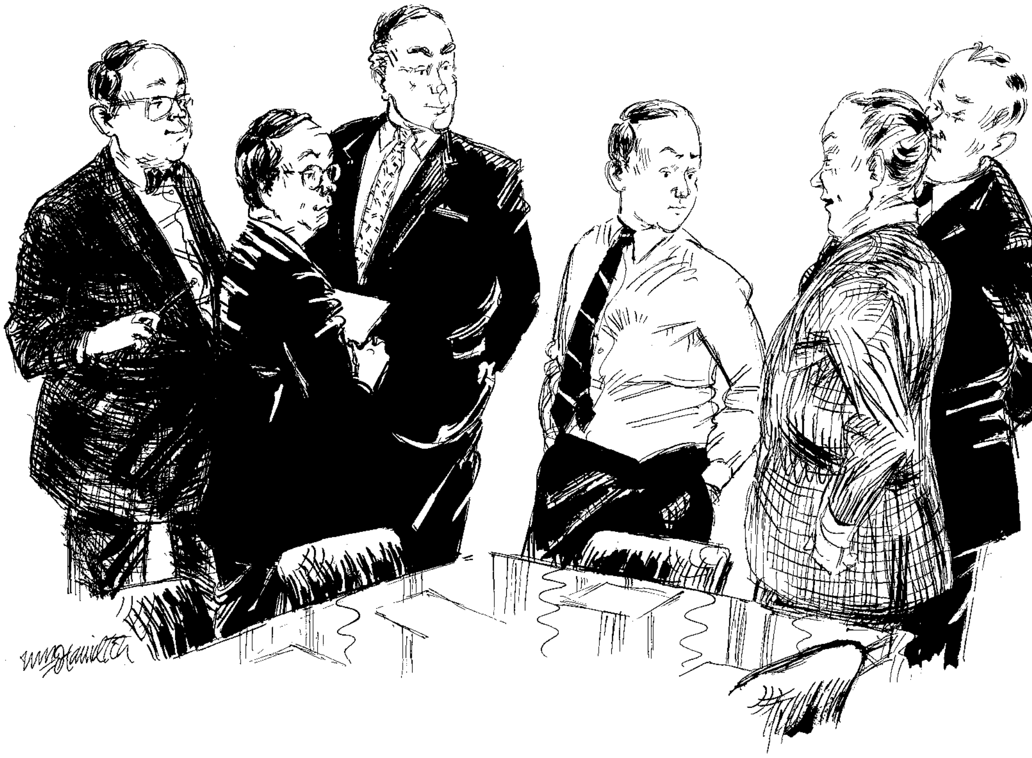
R. Chast

riod. She had presented the whole idea to me as a way to strengthen the womb, but underneath we both knew that a weak womb was not the cause of a missed period. She knew that I knew, but we presented to each other a face of innocence and politeness and even went so far as to curtsy to each other at the end. The one hardship now was that if I did need those herbs, they did not grow where I was and I would have to write to my mother and ask her for them. That would have been hard to do; just my asking for these particular herbs would let her know exactly what I had been up to, and I had always thought I would rather die than admit to her any of my deep, deep secrets.

For the first time in a long time, I began to look forward. It wasn't that I thought each new day would bring unlimited pleasure and happy surprises; I just had a feeling, a wonderful feeling, inside of me instead of dread and fear. If someone had asked me, I would have had to say, Yes, life isn't so bad after all. It was Mariah who asked me if the source of all this was Hugh—she had caught me whistling—and when I told her no, I could see that she did not altogether believe me. What made sense to her was that if you liked being with someone in that particular way, then you must be in love with him. But I was not in love with Hugh. I could tell that being in love would complicate my life just now. I was only half a year free of some almost unbreakable bonds, and it was not in my heart to make new ones. I could take in all of this very easily. Just thinking about his hands and his mouth could make me feel as if I were made up of an extravagant piece of silk; and if I were told that he had left unexpectedly on a trip and would not be back for a long time, I would have to say too bad, for I had not yet grown tired of him. But already I could see ahead to the fifteenth of September, the day when I would bend my knee a little so that I could kiss Hugh's cheek, step into a car, and then wave and wave as it drove away, until he was out of sight. To latch onto this boy—man, I suppose—who liked the way the tightly curled hair on my head and other parts of my body trapped his fingers was not for someone my age, and certainly not for me.



"In this corporation, Mr. Taylor, at this level we do not do shirtsleeves."

MARIAH and Dinah and other people they knew had become upset by what they said was the destruction of the surrounding countryside. Many houses had been built on what they said used to be farmland. Mariah showed me a place that used to be an open meadow, where she said that as a girl she went looking for robin's eggs and picking wildflowers. She moaned against this so loudly that Louisa, who was just at the age where if you are a girl you turn against your mother, said, "Well, what used to be here before this house we are living in was built?" It was a question I had wanted to ask, but I couldn't face the hurt look on Mariah's face.

Mariah decided to write and illustrate a book on these vanishing things and give any money made to an organization devoted to this point of view. Some days she would go out from early morning until late afternoon sketching specimens of all sorts in their various habitats; she gave me the impression that everything was on its last legs and any day now would vanish from the face of the earth. Mariah was the kindest person I had ever known. Her concern was not an unexpected part of her; it could be said that her kindness was the result of her comfortable circumstances, but many people in her position were not as kind and considerate as she was. And that was the reason I couldn't bring myself to point out to her that if all the things she wanted to save in the world were saved, she might find herself in reduced circumstances; I couldn't bring myself to ask her to examine Lewis's daily conversations with his stockbroker, to see if they bore any relation to the things she saw passing away forever before her eyes. Ordinarily that was just the sort of thing I enjoyed doing, but I had grown to love Mariah so much.

Mariah and Lewis had been having a disagreement over what animal was eating the new shoots of a vegetable Lewis had planted in a small patch of dirt that he had turned over and made good for growing vegetables. Lewis really had nothing to do when he was here; he read papers he had sent from the office, and all sorts of books, but being here in a house that overlooked a lake was not his idea. I never got the feeling from him, as I did from Mariah, that this was the only place in the world to be from the middle of June to the middle of September. And so, I suppose to amuse himself, he had made a little garden, and he grew in it green beans, spinach, lettuce, and some tomato plants that bore fruit the size of grapes. He had done this for years now, and always he had enjoyed all the fruits, so to speak, of his labor. But this time, as each little shoot of something made an appearance, an animal would come at night and eat the shoots. Lewis built a fence around the garden, but the animal got around it and ate everything down to the ground. Lewis was sure it was a family of rabbits that Mariah and the children had grown fond of and encouraged to come up into the house.

We were sitting at the dining table, all of us, just finishing a delicious pie of red berries that Mariah had made, when Lewis mentioned again the destruction of his vegetables. Mariah, trying to turn the conversation away from the rabbits, said that a certain sort of bug will slice off the tops of young shoots, but that of course Lewis should avoid pesticides and find a natural antidote, an enemy of this bug. A minute or so went by, allowing the subject of destroyed vegetables to pass from everybody's mind, and then Mariah told, with actual jubilation in her voice, of a sighting of yet another family of rabbits living near the entrance of the driveway; how astonishing and incredible they were, she said, coming up to a few inches from her and looking her right in the eye as if they meant to say something, to tell her the secrets of their existence. Lewis said, "Jesus Christ! The goddam rabbits!" and he made his hands into two fists, lifted them up in the air, and brought them down on the table with such force that everything on the table—eating utensils, plates, cups in saucers, the empty pie dish—rattled and shook as if in an earthquake, and one glass actually tipped over, rolled off the table, and shattered. We all looked at Lewis; in the long silence that followed, that was all we seemed able to do—just look at Lewis. In the silence, a world of something must have appeared; the children were too young to get to the bottom of it, and I was too unfamiliar with a situation like this. But it made Mariah force both her hands into her mouth as if desperate to keep something from coming out. I thought, In the history of civilization, they mention everything, even the water glass shattered on the floor—something is said about that—but there is not one word on the misery to be found at a dining-room table. We all sat there locked up in that moment, and without a doubt it meant something different to everybody, none of it good. The spell was broken by Miriam, who started to cry; she cried and cried the way children will when they know something is wrong but not exactly what. I picked her up to comfort her, and kissed her little head, but I might as well have been doing all that to myself, for I felt as if I were about to lose something I had just found. I gathered the children, and we went upstairs to my room and played a game of gin rummy.

One day Mariah persuaded Lewis to go to the marshlands with her. This was the day I received the tenth letter from my mother to which I would make no reply; as with the nine others before it, I would not even break the seal on the envelope. I believe I heard them drive away; I believe I heard the sound of the car's wheels on the dirt road; I believe so, but I could not really say for sure; it's possible that I just took those things for granted. Later, I wondered if just the way the car door had sounded as it slammed shut, or the way the car's wheels sounded as they ran over the dirt road, should have told me to expect something. The children and I were getting ready to go to the lake when we heard a scream, and we ran to a window that looked out in the direction from which the scream came. We saw Mariah running back toward the house, crying, her hands moving about in the air as if she were conducting a choir. She ran into the house, and just as we were about to go downstairs to see what was the matter, Lewis came into view. He was walking slowly, and in his hands he carried the limp body of

POLONAISE

Acres of synonymous lights, black battery cells
and terminals coiling with traffic, wink out. Sunrise
reddens the steel lake. Downstairs, in the hotel's

Canadian-fall window, a young Polish waitress with eyes
wet as new coal and a pageboy haircut was pouring him
coffee, the maples in glass as yellow as orange juice.

Her porcelain wrist tilted, filling his gaze to the brim.
He hoped adoration unnerved her; the sensible shoes
skirting the bare tables, her hand aligning the service

with finical clicks. As if it had tapped her twice
on the back for her papers, she turned with that nervous
smile of the recent immigrant that borders on tears.

A Polish Sunday enclosed it. A Baroque square, its age
patrolled by young soldiers, the flag of their sagging regime
once bright as her lipstick, the consonants of a language

crunched by their boot soles. In it was the scream
of a kettle leaving a freight yard, then the soft farms
with horses and willows nodding past a train window,

then queues in the drizzle. Then the forms
where her name ran over the margin, then a passport photo
where a scared face waited when she opened the door.

She was part of that pitiless fiction so common now
that it carried her wintry beauty into Canada,
it lined her eyelashes with the snow's blue shadow,

• •

it made her slant cheekbones flash like the cutlery
in the hope of a proper life. At the cashier's machine
she stood like a birch at the altar, and, very quietly,

snow draped its lace over the raven's-wing sheen,
and her name melted into some other's like flakes in a river
or a black pond in which the wind shakes packets of milk.

When she stood with the check he tried reading the glow
of brass letters on her blouse. Her skin, shaded in silk,
smelt fresh as a country winter before the first snow.

Snow brightened the linen, the pepper, salt domes, the gables
of peaked napkins, silencing Warsaw, feathering quiet Cracow;
then the raven's wing flew again between the white tables.

There are days when, however simple the future, we do not go
toward it but leave part of life in a lobby whose elevators
divide and enclose us, brightening digits that show

exactly where we are headed, while a young Polish waitress
is emptying an ashtray, and we are drawn to a window
whose strings, if we pull them, widen an emptiness.

We yank the iron-gray drapes, and the screeching pulleys
reveal in the silence not fall in Toronto
but a city whose language was seized by its police,

that other servitude Nina Something was born into,
where under gun-barrel chimneys the smoke holds its voice
till it rises with hers. Zagajewski. Herbert. Milosz.

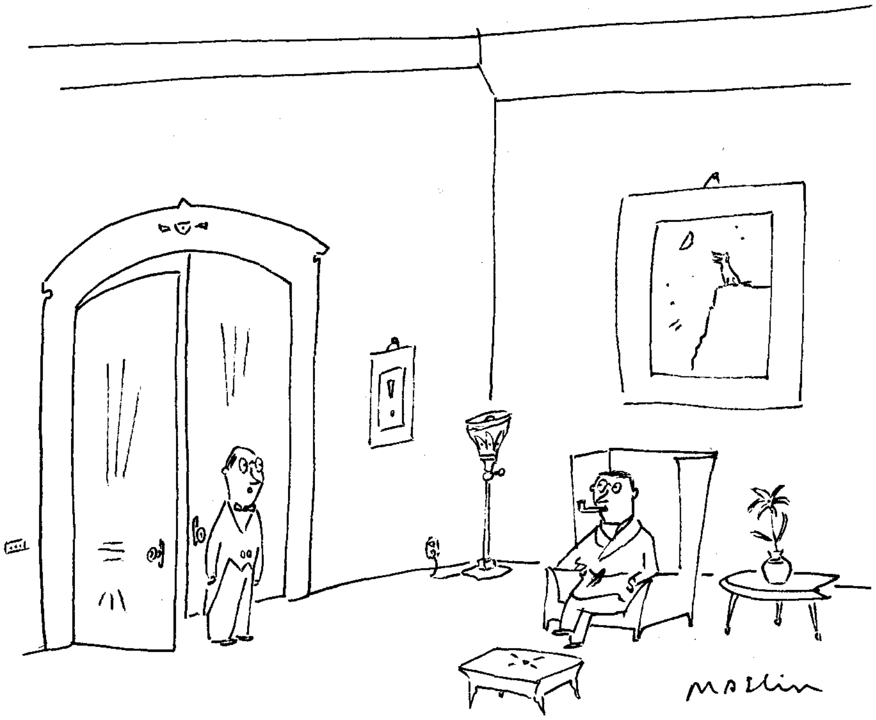
—DEREK WALCOTT

• •

a small animal, a rabbit. He had a funny look on his face; he looked like a boy in a picture, a boy who had placed a live mouse under his mother's saucer and, on getting the desired result, pretended not to know what all the commotion was about. Lewis walked along in this way, and then something made him look up, and he saw our five faces framed in the open window. He stopped for a moment; whatever he saw in his children's faces I do not know, but I suddenly felt sorry for him. He looked lost, unhappy, as if he might remember this as one of the most unhappy days in his entire life.

They buried the rabbit in a ceremony I could not bring myself to attend. The ceremony was another one of those untruths that I had only just begun to see as universal to life with mother, father, and some children. I had thought the untruths in family life belonged exclusively to me and my family, with my mother's unopened letters representing evidence of the most important kind. Mariah and Lewis told the children that the car had run over the rabbit by accident, and they said it in such a way that I could only think they wanted the children to believe the car was driving itself. But when the children were out of the room Mariah would accuse Lewis of running over the rabbit on purpose, and Lewis would say that it really had been an accident, that the very path he took to avoid hitting the rabbit was just where the rabbit ran. Then Mariah would say, "But you aren't sorry that you did it?" and he would say, "No, I am not sorry that it happened." It was an important difference, but in a situation like that, how could Mariah be expected to see it?

EVERYTHING remains the same and yet nothing is the same. When this revelation was new to me, years ago, I told it to my mother, and when I saw how deeply familiar she was with it I was speechless. One day, Louisa said to me, after reading a letter from one of her school chums, "My mother and father love each other very much." She said it with such force that I looked at her closely, for I thought she would reveal something. And what made her say that—something in the letter, or something in the air? Hours before, I had walked into a room and heard Mariah say to Lewis, "What's wrong with us?" Then their friend Dinah came in; she was on her daily walk and was stopping by to say hello. Before Dinah came in, Mariah and Lewis had been standing there like two beings from different planets looking for evidence of a common history and finding none. It was horrible. As soon as Dinah came, Lewis's mood changed. He was no longer in the same room with Mariah; he was in the same room with Dinah. Lewis and Dinah started to laugh at the same things, and their peals of laughter would fly up into the air wrapped around each other like a toffee twist. Mariah could not see this and tried to join in, but every time she started a sentence about one thing, they started on another completely different subject. This all happened very quickly, and probably if I had not disliked Dinah so much I would not have noticed it. But I did notice it, and it seemed important, like a small part of a map, isolated and blown up large in the hope that it might yield a clue. Mariah and I left that room together, but I had forgotten to take with me what I had gone there to get in the first place, and so I went back. I saw Lewis standing behind Dinah, his arms around her shoulders, and he was licking her neck over and over again, and how she liked it. This was not a show, this was something real; and I thought of Mariah and all those books she had filled with photographs that began when she and Lewis first met, in Paris in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower or in London in the shadow of Big Ben or somewhere foolish like that. Mariah then wore her yellow hair long and unkempt, and did not shave her legs or underarms, as a symbol of something, and was not a virgin then and had not been for a long time. And then there were pictures of them getting married against their parents' wishes, behind their parents' backs, and of their children just born in hospitals, and birthday parties and trips to canyons and deserts and mountains, and all sorts of other events. But here was a picture that no one would ever take—a picture



"The sun's down, and the moon and stars are out. Will there be anything else, sir?"

that would not end up in one of those books, but a significant picture all the same.

A woman like Dinah was not unfamiliar to me, nor was a man like Lewis. Where I came from, it was well known that some women and all men in general could not be trusted in certain areas. My father had thirty children; I was his last and only legitimate child. A woman he had children with tried to kill me when I was in my mother's stomach. She had earlier failed to kill my mother. My father had lived with another woman for years and was the father of her three children; she tried to kill my mother and me many times. My mother saw an obeah woman every Friday to prevent these attempts from being successful. When my mother married my father, he was an old man and she a young woman. This suited them both. She had someone who would leave her alone yet not cause her to lose face in front of other women; he had someone who would take care of him in his dotage. This was not a situation I hoped to take as an example, but I could see that, in marrying a man, my mother had thought very hard not so much about happiness as about her own peace of mind.

Mariah did not know that Lewis was not in love with her anymore. It was not the sort of thing she could imagine. She could imagine the demise of the fowl of the air, fish in the sea, mankind itself, but not that the only man she had ever loved would no longer love her. She complained about the weather, she complained about all sorts of things that ordinarily she would not have noticed; she criticized my behavior, and then she criticized herself for criticizing me.

I SAID goodbye to everything one month before we left. I would not miss the lake; it stank anyway, and the fish that lived in it were dying from living in it. I would not miss the long hot days, I would not miss the cool shaded woods, I would not miss the strange birds, I would not miss animals that came out at dusk looking for food—I would not miss anything, for I long ago had decided not to miss anything. I sang songs; they were all about no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, no good deed going unpunished, and unrequited love. I sang the tunes out loud and kept the words to myself.

I said goodbye to Hugh, though he did not know it. It was late at night, and we were lying on the shore of the lake without any clothes on. A large moon was overhead; it was in a shroud, and so rain would fall the following day. As I kissed Hugh, my tongue reaching to caress the roof of his mouth, I thought of all the other tongues I had held in my mouth in this way. I was only nineteen, so it was not a long list yet. There was Tanner, and he was the first boy with whom I did everything possible you can do with a boy. The very first time we did everything we wanted to do, he spread a towel on the floor of his room for me to lie down on, because the old springs in his bed made too much noise; it was a white towel, and when I got up it was stained with blood. When he saw it, he first froze with fear and then smiled and said, "Oh," a note too triumphant in his voice, and I don't know how but I found the presence of mind to say, "It's just my period coming on." I did not care about being a virgin and had long been looking forward to the day when I could rid myself of that status, but when I saw how much it mattered to him to be the first boy I had been with, I could not give him such a hold over me. Before that, there was a girl from school I used to kiss, but we were best friends and were only using each other for practice. There was the boy I used to kiss in the library and continued to kiss long after I had ceased to care about him one way or the other, just to see how undone he could become by my kisses. One night my friend Peggy and I, on our rounds in the city, met a boy in a record store and both thought he was quite interesting to look at, for he reminded us of a singer we liked. We invited him to have a cup of coffee with us, and he accepted, but over the coffee all he talked about was football. Peggy hated sports of any kind, because they reminded her of her father, and I only liked cricket, which was the sport my father played. We were so disappointed that we went back to my room and smoked marijuana and kissed each other until we were exhausted and fell asleep. Her tongue was narrow and pointed and soft. And that was how I said goodbye to Hugh, my arms and legs wrapped tightly around him, my tongue in his mouth, thinking of all the people I had held in this way.

—JAMAICA KINCAID

A REPORTER AT LARGE

A RICH COUNTRY GONE WRONG

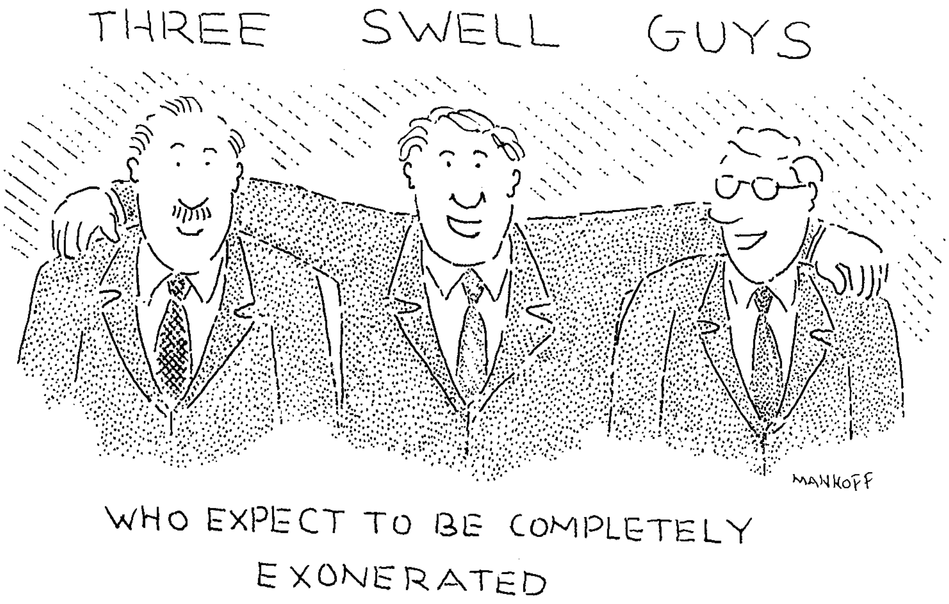
BURMA is a nation that does not have to worry about air pollution, because it has little industry. The country also avoids the plague of traffic congestion, because there are few cars. No one complains about urban overcrowding, because in Burma—a country the size of Texas, with forty million people—there are no jobs in the cities to attract migrants. No one needs to organize a historic-preservation movement, because hardly a new building has gone up since the British withdrew, in 1948. Rangoon and Mandalay, the only large cities, boast not a single skyscraper, and in the entire country there are just a handful of elevators and one escalator, which is boarded up. For twenty-seven years, Burma has stood isolated in the world, governed by a brutal and xenophobic military dictatorship, which, though it has maintained diplomatic relations with all major nations and has not refused foreign aid, is as suspicious of anything Russian or Chinese as of anything American. In the nineteen-sixties, the government, to guard against the taint of foreign ideas, limited visitors to a stay of one day. That limit gradually grew with the need for hard currency, jumping from seven days to fourteen in May of this year. But this liberalization came with a significant catch: all tourists must now hire an official government guide, whose duties include restricting contacts with the Burmese people.

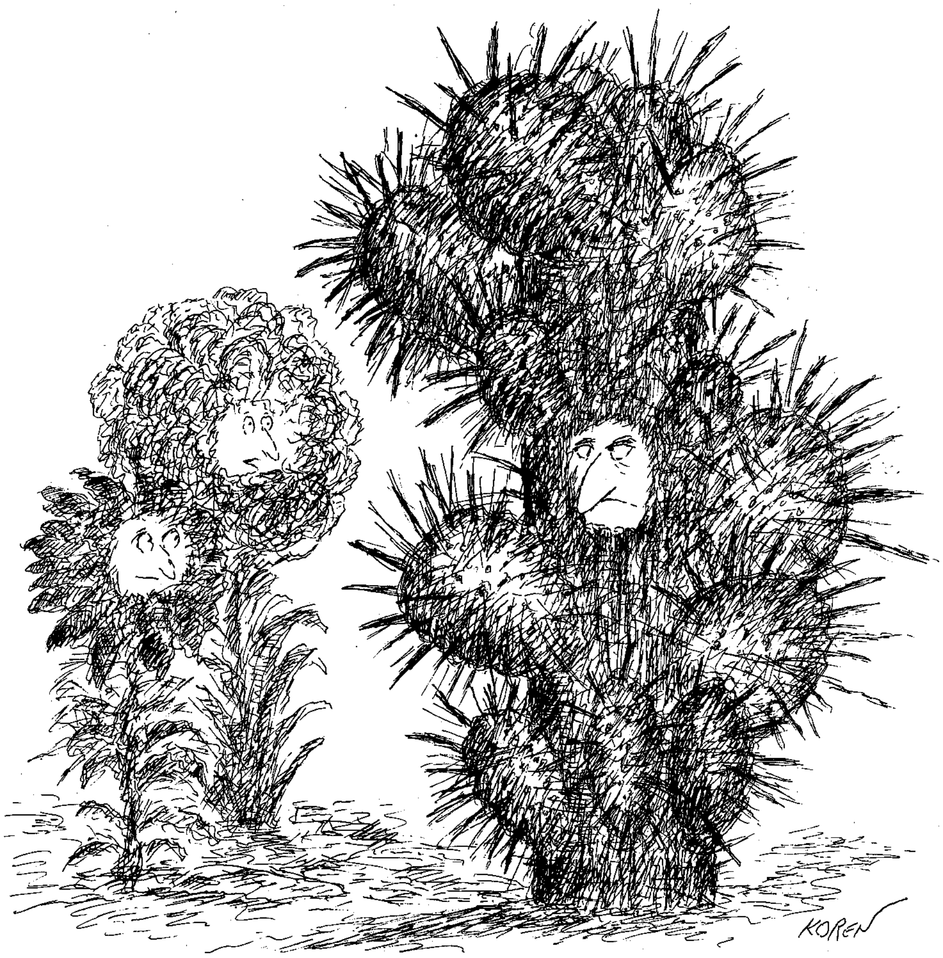
For many years, the few visitors who have come have been fascinated by Burma—a nation that for three decades has shut itself off so tightly from the modern world it has all but faded from view. Then, during the summer of 1988, an uprising of unprecedented scale propelled Burma onto the front pages of American newspapers. A people's movement arose with what seemed like total spontaneity. Without any identifiable leadership, without a program or a platform beyond a demand for freedom, students and Buddhist monks took to the streets daily. They rallied their countrymen to the point where even government workers and policemen left their posts to join the demonstrations. By September, the entire nation stood allied, opposed only by the government and the Army. America—a remote nation whose wealth and liberty people could only dream about—became a symbol of what the protesters wanted for Burma. Each day in Rangoon, the capital, crowds gathered downtown in front of a former bank building that houses the American Embassy. Hundreds of thousands of Burmese—many of whom did not understand English—marched under English-language banners calling for "DEMOCRACY."

But on September 19th, in an action that now seems almost a blueprint for what happened in China nine months later, soldiers took to the streets and the roofs and gunned down anyone in sight. At the American Embassy, frightened employees huddled on the floor as troops outside fired into groups of demonstrators. At Rangoon General Hospital, the bodies of the dead and the wounded piled up in corridors. The government decreed that from that day on outdoor political gatherings of more than four people would be fired upon. It kept its word. Life in Rangoon changed in many other ways as well, with the closing of all schools, a 10 P.M. curfew, and thousands of political arrests—arrests so numerous that in July the jails were emptied of most common criminals to make room for new political prisoners.

In January of this year—with Burma's rulers discredited, foreign aid cut off, the population openly discontented—the Burmese government made a move that defies Western logic. For months, there had been government pronouncements about eventual elections and about liberalized investment policies. Now—for the first time since 1962, when its present dictator, General Ne Win, seized power—the government invited the foreign press in to observe Burma's new, "open" society. General Saw Maung, the head of state, who had been installed by Ne Win in September of 1988, announced, "We have a teaching from the Buddha: Welcome to see for yourself and to see the truth." In 1985 and again in 1986, I had visited Burma as a tourist, since that was the only way a reporter could enter the country; on my visa application I had listed my occupation as teacher. Shortly after January's announcement, I applied as a journalist. The Foreign Ministry approved my visa request in mid-March and told me that I might enter Burma on April 17th. (In mid-July, the government abandoned the policy of inviting foreign journalists to visit.)

Visitors to Burma are not allowed to go to the towering mountains that ring the country like a horseshoe, because


THREE SWELL GUYS
MANKOFF
WHO EXPECT TO BE COMPLETELY EXONERATED



"There's an awful lot of anger there."

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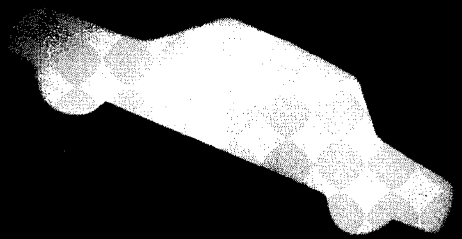
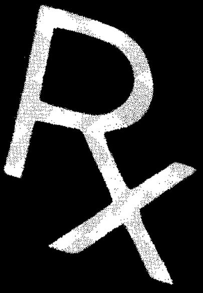
for decades the mountainous areas have been controlled by ethnic minorities rebelling against the government. Nor can visitors enjoy the country's magnificent beaches, because they lack tourist facilities. But just the visitor's standard itinerary—Rangoon, Mandalay, Inle Lake, and the ruined city of Pagan—offers experiences hard to find elsewhere in Asia. Rangoon was laid out by the British as a colonial capital beginning in 1852, and it exists today almost exactly as the British left it, with the seediness of forty-one years of decay somehow adding to its charm. It has two and a half million residents, but because it also has vast parks, lakes, and fields, and tree-lined boulevards on which there is almost no traffic, it is marked by none of the manic bustle that characterizes so many Asian capitals. Singapore and Bangkok must have felt before the Second World War the way Rangoon feels today. Far to the north of Rangoon, on the great central plains of Burma, is Mandalay, a city of five hundred thousand people. The center of Burmese culture and religion, Mandalay is a jumble of buildings and pagodas fanning out from a moat and, inside it, massive walls that once surrounded the royal palace of King Mindon, who founded the city in 1857. Inle Lake, in Shan State, to the east, is surrounded by farming and fishing villages. Spanning the Irrawaddy River west of Mandalay is Pagan, one of the most magnificent ruins on earth. Spread out for miles across a flat plain, Pagan consists of more than two thousand carved and decorated pagodas and temples, which were built in the twelfth century.

The Burmans—the ethnic group that makes up two-thirds of the Burmese population—are an extraordinarily handsome people, often tall and willowy, their skin the color of light coffee. Men and women alike wear longyi—ankle-length skirts tied at the waist with a huge knot. During my previous visits, Burmese who knew English had seemed eager to talk to foreign visitors, and they often displayed an uncanny knowledge of the language and life of America. In other Asian countries, my conversations had tended to be superficial, little more than exchanges of amenities. But a Burmese—once he had looked around and convinced himself that no police informers were present—plunged with zeal into any subject. Meeting people in Burma posed little problem then; you needed only to walk into a tea shop. Tea shops are the center of Burmese social life, and the Burmese will sit for hours in a tea shop on shin-high stools that quickly prove to be alien territory for American legs. Strong black tea mixed with sweetened condensed milk is served. You take the cup, pour a little of the tea into the saucer, and then hold the saucer to your mouth and drink; if you drink from the cup, people at nearby tables will stare at you. Afterward, you get a pot of weak Chinese tea to wash it down—and you drink that from a small cup. In the past, a Westerner sitting in a tea shop alone quickly found himself engulfed in conversation. One day in 1985, while I was waiting out a rainstorm in a Mandalay tea shop, a young Burmese man came in, shook the water off his hat, walked directly to my table, and said, "It's raining cats and dogs." He then launched into a conversation whose every sentence was filled with American idioms. I finally asked him why he was using all those idioms. Without a second's hesitation, he replied, "To keep up with the Joneses."

In this same tea shop, also on my first visit to Burma, I met U Myint Thame, who became a close friend. (The "U" that precedes a Burmese name is an honorific, but much more important than the equivalent "Mr." A Burmese wouldn't mention even his worst enemy without using the "U" before every reference.) U Myint Thame came up to me, asked if I was an American, and then, looking pleased with himself, said, "Tell me everything about Rambo-mania." He turned out to be a free-lance magazine writer from Rangoon who read American books and magazines voraciously, often in the United States Information Service library. He was paid nine dollars for each article he wrote for a Burmese magazine; he had turned down fifteen dollars to write about

Next Time You Travel, Take Along A Little Peace Of Mind.





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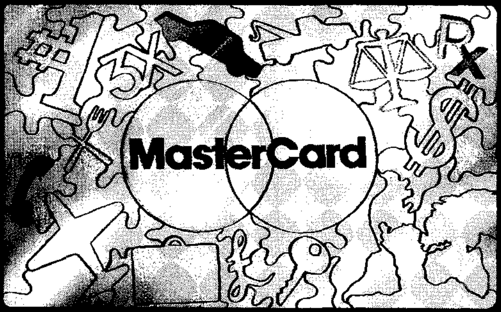

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American rock stars, because he considered that assignment "selling out." He supported a wife and child on two hundred and fifty dollars a year, and they lived in part of a tiny wooden house; their part was filled with cartons of books and was separated from the living quarters of other tenants by a sheet of paper tacked to the support beams. U Myint Thame had a broad knowledge of American politics and culture, but the next year, when we travelled together to Mandalay and the former British hill station of Maymyo, I had to show him how to use a flush toilet, and when he saw steam from a hot shower he thought the hotel was on fire.

U Myint Thame demonstrated to me one of the characteristics of Burmese culture that make the country so attractive to Westerners who know it well: when you reach a certain point in your friendship with a Burmese, you become part of his family. One day, I told U Myint Thame about the American practice of putting aged parents in nursing homes—a concept beyond the imagination of most Asians. He looked sad and troubled and said, "When you get old, I want you to come to Burma to live. The door to my house will always be open for you. We'll take care of you." This year, shortly before leaving the United States, I sent word to U Myint Thame that I was coming to Burma, and asked him to serve as my interpreter, but only if he felt that doing so was entirely safe. I told him not to reply but to meet me at the Rangoon airport if he could.

WHY was Burma inviting foreign journalists to visit the country at this time? My passport carried a clue to the answer. The Burmese visa stamp I got in Bangkok read "Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma," but "Socialist Republic" had been crossed out with blue pencil; last year, the country officially changed its name to the Union of Burma. (And in June of this year, possibly on the theory that a new name would help erase memories of the political repression and the economic ruin that had come to be associated with Burma, the name was changed once again, this time to Myanmar, which is what the country had always been called in the Burmese language.) The Burmese government was seeing the cause of democracy advance all over the world. On Burma's northern border, China had transformed itself from an isolated nation with a moribund economy into a promising member of the world community; now its students were demanding democracy as well. The repression that was to come this summer was still nowhere in evidence. China advancing, Burma crumbling: the contrast could have provided little comfort to the Burmese rulers. Burma had succeeded in putting down with bullets a manifestation of people power, but what was to come next? The government clearly had no solution, but admitting journalists seemed to be a symbolic gesture—a tiny opening to the West.

Ne Win had somehow withstood all the forces that provoked major changes in so many other countries: discontent with the economy, a rebellious student population, a growing outrage at the tactics of a tyrannical government. He had crushed a national uprising, and I wanted to find out how he had succeeded.

U Myint Thame was at the Rangoon airport to meet me, along with his wife and their eleven-year-old son. We embraced, then piled into the back of a Japanese pickup truck for the drive to my hotel. (Such trucks, which have benches in the bed and a canvas top above it, can be used as taxis, buses, or private vehicles. They have replaced a group of rusty old De Sotos as the basic transportation in Rangoon for people who can afford not to take a city bus.) As we pulled away from the airport, U Myint Thame said, "I know you didn't want me to be your interpreter if there was risk involved. Well, there is some danger. But I had to do it anyway. You're like part of my family, and I couldn't desert you."

On my previous visits, Rangoon had looked as if no one had used a paintbrush since the British pulled out, but now virtually every exterior surface had a fresh coat of whitewash, and the whole city seemed dazzlingly bright. Several Burmese told me that the government had distributed the whitewash to the owners of buildings and houses in a "beautification campaign" motivated by its desire to cover up political slogans written on the walls during the democracy demonstrations. I was also told that people had diluted the lime with additional water so they could sell the excess on the black market, and that when the summer monsoons came the whitewash

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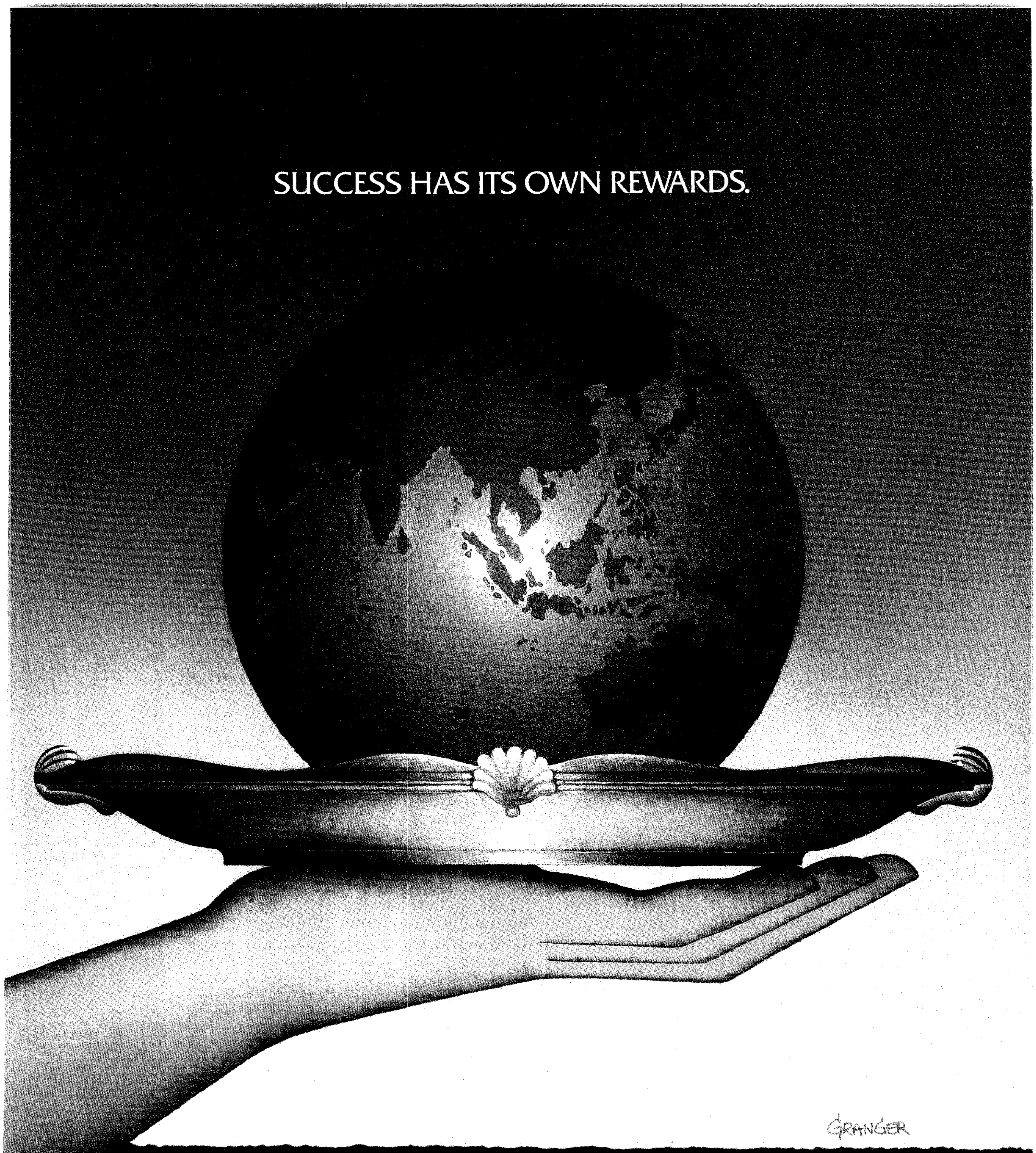
SUCCESS HAS ITS OWN REWARDS.
GRANGER

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would probably flow into the gutters.

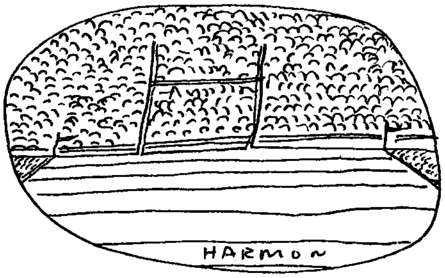
Rangoon had new pedestrian overpasses, too. Early this year, it seems, the government decided to build footbridges spanning some of the major downtown streets. Now, a worker in Rangoon would earn a maximum of about twenty kyats a day, equivalent to forty cents, and a gallon of gasoline costs seventy kyats. (In this article, all currency translations are at the black-market rate of fifty kyats to the dollar; the official government rate is six and a half to the dollar.) Since hardly any workers can afford to buy gasoline, to say nothing of a car, traffic is sparse; when I first saw one of the overpasses, during a morning "rush hour," a dog was sleeping on the roadway beneath it. The explanation for the overpasses seems to be that the Army found it inconvenient to fire on demonstrators from roofs. Lining up on a footbridge would be much more efficient.

There are constant reminders that the Army is in charge of the country. Trucks filled with soldiers rumble through Rangoon. Armed soldiers are to be seen everywhere in the Shwedagon Pagoda, the revered symbol of Burmese Buddhism whose golden dome and spire tower over Rangoon. At some major traffic circles, concrete blockhouses with loopholes for guns have recently been built, and painted the same reddish-orange color as a wall erected a year ago around the compound of the Ministry of Defense. When the curfew begins, at 10 P.M., the streets are abandoned to the Army. For the first few months after the massacre of demonstrators last September, a civilian appearing on the street after curfew risked being shot by a soldier; these days, anyone violating the curfew would more likely be hauled in for interrogation. While regular taxis won't take the chance of violating curfew, in Burma anything can be bought for the right amount of money. One night when I wasn't ready to eat dinner until eight-thirty, I stood on the street and waved at passing cars until one stopped; the driver took me to a restaurant, sat at a nearby table and kept looking at his watch nervously while I hurried through the meal, and then drove me back to my hotel. The charge for this service was a hundred and fifty kyats, or three dollars—a small fortune in Burma.

Rangoon had a very different feel now. The tea shops were jammed with students, because the government had closed the universities in June of last year and no jobs of any sort were available, but when I walked into a tea shop I didn't find the smiles and curiosity that had usually greeted me in the past; this time, many people averted their eyes when I looked at them. I was successful in making contact with people only when I jogged around Royal Lake, a mile north of downtown Rangoon, early each morning, wearing running shorts with an American-flag pattern. Several Burmese would call out "America" or wave; one day, a young man standing on the street motioned to me to stop and handed me a flower.

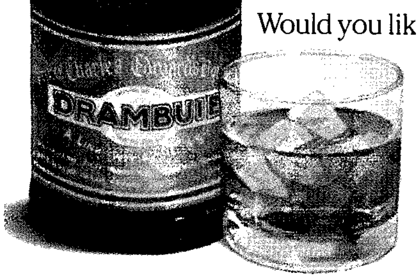
Those Burmese who were courageous enough to talk with reporters told frightening stories of life in Rangoon since last September. Particularly shocking were accounts of men being snatched off the streets to serve as porters for the Army in its campaign against the rebelling ethnic minorities. During the student uprising, the Army had transferred to Rangoon some of the troops battling the Karens. About five hundred thousand Karens, who are largely Christians and animists, live in rebel-held territory near the Thai border, occupying a third of Burma's Karen State and some adjacent areas. They have been fighting for their independence since 1949. The Karens took advantage of the troop withdrawals to seize additional land. In October, with the demonstrations repressed, the Army turned its attention to regaining that land. The Karens had protected it by laying mines, and the Army forced some of the porters taken from the streets to march ahead of the troops and act as human minesweepers. The State Department noted that the practice of seizing people as porters was continuing as recently as a month ago.

Before I left for Rangoon, a friend in the United States gave me the name of a Burmese professor in Rangoon who spoke fluent English and had many contacts with Americans. It turned out that this professor had been temporarily detained last October in one of the sweeps to round up porters. "I was waiting for a bus near the Shwedagon Pagoda," he told me when I got in touch with him. "An Army truck suddenly pulled up, and soldiers started grabbing every man at the bus stop. Everyone started to run. A woman fell and was trampled in the rush, and as I tried to help her a soldier grabbed me. They pushed me into the back of a truck with about twenty-five other people. They took us to a police station, and recorded our names, addresses, and occupations. By then, you could bribe the police to set you free if you had an expensive watch or were carrying enough money. I had very little cash on me, but I always carried letters from American friends. I told the police that I was working with Americans and that I wanted to call the U.S. Embassy. They checked me by asking me the phone number. I had memorized it, and I think this was what saved me. A police captain went away, made a couple of telephone calls, and, after half an hour, set me free. He warned me not to say a word about it to anyone."



How did Burma reach the point where the government would build pedestrian overpasses to be used for the shooting of demonstrators and the military would snatch men from the streets of Rangoon to become human minesweepers? The answer to this, as to all questions involving the government and the military of Burma, revolves around the seventy-eight-year-old General Ne Win, who ostensibly retired in July of 1988, when he resigned as chairman of the Burma Socialist Program Party, but who clearly still makes all the major decisions. Ne Win, an intensely private man, shuns all trappings of a cult of personality; you will never see his picture displayed in a government office. A notorious womanizer who has been married seven times, he has imposed a strict code of morals on Burma, outlawing night clubs and banning photographs of people kissing. While he is said to be capable of extreme kindness and generosity, he has also had close friends in the government thrown into jail, and he has allowed his Army to commit unspeakable atrocities upon the rebellious ethnic minorities and, most recently, upon student demonstrators. Ne Win is so intensely xenophobic that he has sought to purge Burma of foreign

In 1777, the Duchess of Edinburgh threw a ball and word got out that Drambuie was to be served. They came from as far away as Albuquerque.



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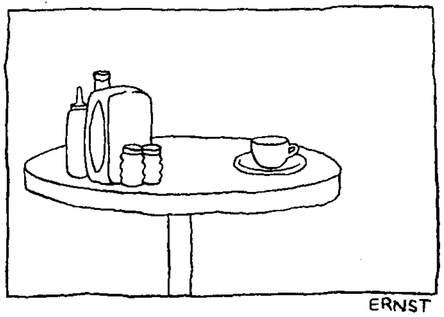
influence, yet he has often left the country for months at a time—to seek medical care in London, to patronize health spas in Switzerland, and, according to an account that came from a friend, to undergo psychoanalysis in Vienna. He sets the tone for life in Burma in every respect. When his daughter Sanda Win failed an English-language examination while seeking to attend a medical school in Britain, he restored English instruction to a place of prominence in Burma's schools. When he decided to take up golf, in the early nineteen-sixties, the whole country took up golf; today, there are more than a hundred golf courses in Burma, and the courses are the key places for Western diplomats to meet Burmese officials.

Ne Win leads a reclusive life in a three-house compound on the edge of Inya Lake, in northern Rangoon. He's an avid reader; a librarian from Rangoon University once took three weeks to catalogue his library. At least two thousand soldiers are garrisoned near his home. Behind the compound are a steel fence and land mines, to keep out any intruders who might come by way of the lake. When I asked my driver to drive toward his compound, we had little success; rolls of barbed wire blocked the street, and troops with submachine guns motioned to us to turn off. While Ne Win rarely appears in public, stories of his exploits circulate widely in Rangoon. Some of the stories have enough witnesses to be credible. Two Western diplomats independently gave me identical accounts of Ne Win's running after a Burmese man on a golf course about fifteen years ago and trying to hit him with a golf club; the man was accused of having slept with Ne Win's wife. (Both diplomats are friends of the victim.) In 1975, Ne Win, with his armed bodyguards, invaded a party at the Inya Lake Hotel where people were dancing to Western music. He beat up a drummer and kicked in a drum; apparently, the music was loud enough to be heard at Ne Win's house, across the lake. Western music and dancing were thenceforth banned in Burma.

Among Ne Win's more interesting foreign visits was a secret five-day trip to Oklahoma City in April of 1987, made on a whim to visit a wealthy American woman named Ardith Dolese, whom he had first met in London soon after the Second World War. Ne Win chartered a World Airways DC-10 and instructed other top officials, including the foreign minister, the defense minister, and five high-ranking military commanders—forty-five people in all, including some members of his family and his doctor—to come along. On this trip, which the American press did not find out about when it took place, Ne Win remained in his hotel room most of the time, reading American magazines and technical journals on oil exploration. The next month, Ne Win invited Mrs. Dolese and some friends and family to Burma. "We were on a floor of the Inya Lake Hotel all by ourselves, with guards," she told me. "No one else was staying on that floor. Wherever we went, the guards went with us. Everyone couldn't have been more polite, but we didn't have much of a chance to see things. I don't know why we were guarded; I guess that's what happens when you visit General Ne Win."

Despite Ne Win's fondness for visiting the West (Hammersmith Hospital in London has a Burma Suite in honor of the fact that he is one of its best clients), he lost little time expunging foreign influences from Burma when he seized power, in 1962. He nationalized industry, banks, import-export operations, and most retail businesses without compensation, including all businesses owned by foreigners. He stripped Indian and Chinese residents of their property; two hundred thousand of them, some of whom had lived in Burma for decades, were forced to leave the country without their assets. He ended all the activities of the World Bank in Burma. In foreign affairs, Burma has maintained a rigid neutrality; in 1979, it withdrew from a conference of nonaligned nations when it sensed a tilt toward the Soviet Union.

THE roots of Ne Win's xenophobia aren't hard to grasp. Starting in 1886, when England conquered what remained of the Burmese kingdom, the British ruled Burma as a province of India. They assumed all the high government offices, and they appointed Indians to the lower-level positions. Indian merchants, moneylenders, professionals, and laborers came to dominate the economy, and the Army troops, too, were largely Indians and minorities of the northern hill tribes. Burmans were frozen out. By the start of the Second World War, the typical Burman was a landless laborer drifting from village to village. Rangoon, the capital, was in large part a city of foreigners: before the Second World War, there were two hundred and fifty thousand Indians, forty thousand Chinese, and a hundred and sixty thousand Burmese (Burmans and other indigenous ethnic groups). George Orwell, who was a police official in Burma in the nineteen-twenties, captured the racism of the British occupiers in his novel "Burmese Days." One of the characters, talking about the "damn black swine who've been slaves since the beginning of history," pleads, "No natives in this Club! It's by constantly giving way over small things like that that we've ruined the Empire. This country's only rotten with sedition because we've been too soft with them. The only possible policy is to treat 'em like the dirt they are. . . . We've got to hang together and say, 'We are the masters and you beggars. You beggars keep your place.' "



Ne Win, who was later to act so ruthlessly to suppress student dissent, was himself part of a nationalist uprising, called the Thakin movement, that started with a group of students at Rangoon University in 1930. They called each other *thakin*, which literally means "my owner" and was the title by which Burmese addressed Europeans. After the Second World War, two of the movement's leaders, Thakin Aung San and Thakin Nu, became the most important figures in the move for Burma's independence. In 1941, Aung San and Ne Win were among the so-called Thirty Comrades—young Burmese nationalists who secretly left the country to be trained by the Japanese in guerrilla warfare. They reëntered Burma with the Japanese invasion, in December of 1941, and organized the Burmese into the nationalist Liberation Army. But in 1945 Aung San, convinced that the Japanese would not carry out their promise to grant Burma independence, transferred his Army, of ten thousand men, to the Allied side.

After the war, Britain's new Labour Government, led by Clement Attlee, quickly agreed to General Aung San's demand for Burma's independence. National elections for a Constituent Assembly were held in April of 1947, with Aung San's party, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, winning a majority of the seats, and Aung San set up an interim government. But on July 19th two men with submachine guns, who had been hired by an opposition, right-wing politician, burst into a session of the Executive Council of the interim government and opened fire. Aung San, who was then thirty-three, and six of his ministers were killed, and Burma lost its only genuine national hero. The British asked U Nu, the oldest and wisest of the Thakin group, to form a new Executive Council, and the interim government continued. U Nu became Prime Minister when Burma achieved its independence, on January 4, 1948, at the astrologically auspicious hour of 4:20 A.M. (Astrology has always played a significant role in Burmese beliefs. The day you were born determines your name and your character, for instance.)

U Nu presided over a parliamentary democracy for most of the years until Ne Win's 1962 coup. But his tenure as Prime Minister was plagued with problems. In 1949, several dissident groups, including the Karens and two Communist organizations, took up arms against the government and almost overthrew it; the Burmese Army, by then under the command of Ne Win, saved the day, eventually forcing the dissidents to seek refuge in the border areas. U Nu also failed to resurrect Burma's economy from the ravages it had suffered in the Second World War. In addition, he faced problems within his own political party; the Freedom League split in two in 1958, virtually paralyzing the government. U Nu decided to transfer power to a caretaker government headed by Ne Win, with the mandate of restoring order and stability so that elections could be held. By all accounts, Ne Win was completely scrupulous in working within the constitution, and was very effective in revitalizing the government and bringing about needed reforms.

The 1960 elections brought U Nu back to power; he won decisively over a faction of the Freedom League supported by the Army. In February of 1962, he attempted to resolve the vexatious problem of the ethnic minorities by calling the minority groups to Rangoon for a conference. Early on the morning of March 2nd, while the conference was still going on, General Ne Win and his Army moved in, with a quick and efficient coup d'état, which cost only one life. Ne Win apparently feared that U Nu was about to grant some minority groups independence—a move that in his eyes would have gutted the Burmese state and, not incidentally, deprived the Army of the threat it needed to legitimatize its powerful role in Burmese society. U Nu was arrested in his bedroom by a lone lieutenant waving a revolver, was kept in prison for four years, and then was exiled; in 1980, at Ne Win's invitation, he returned to Burma.

Ne Win's coup provoked virtually no opposition. But under his rule the Burmese economy was dragged down

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to depths that made the U Nu era look like boom times. In the British colonial era, up till the Second World War, thanks to the rich farmland of the Irrawaddy delta, Burma was the world's leading exporter of rice, producing three and a half million tons a year for export—half the rice traded on international markets. In U Nu's final years in office, rice exports were still at the level of two million tons a year. But by 1988 they had dropped to twenty thousand tons, and, in a country blessed with a relatively small population and large amounts of fertile land, there were for the first time reports of food shortages. Under British rule, Burma was a major supplier of crude oil to other Asian nations; now it can't produce enough oil to meet its own needs. The government-owned factories, run by bureaucrats from the Army, who reject any foreign expertise and technology, all operate at a loss. An economist in Rangoon told me the story of one such factory, in the southern city of Bassein. “It was a glass factory built in the early nineteen-seventies,” he said. “Although there's no sand near Bassein, they located it there, because someone had promised Ne Win there would be a factory in Bassein. Then, last June, they finally ran out of raw materials. But it's more expensive to close down a glass factory temporarily than to recycle its output of glass back into the furnaces, and that's what they did for a while. Finally, the factory did shut down, with five hundred million kyats of unsold glass in its inventory. They can't sell the glass—no one has the money to buy it, it would cost too much to ship, and, besides, it's a cheap sort of glass that no one wants.”

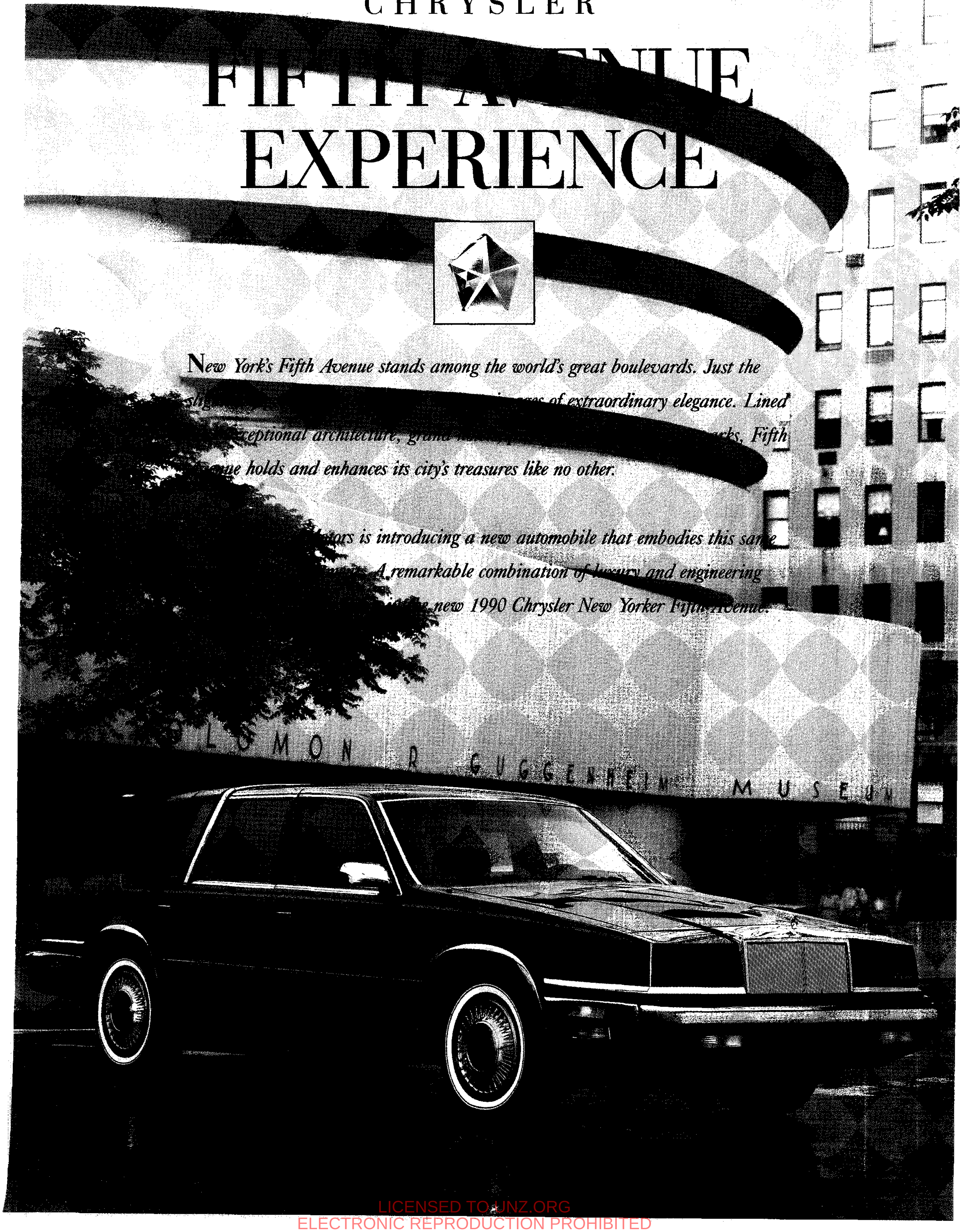
In early 1987, the Burmese government swallowed its pride and asked the United Nations to put it in the category of “least-developed country,” or L.D.C., which would qualify it for additional aid. Making the request must have been humiliating for the military government, because it was in effect admitting that it had brought this once-rich country, with its fertile farmland and vast resources of oil, timber, and gems, down to the level of a pauper state. Burma ended up qualifying for the L.D.C. designation, since its per-capita income amounted to two hundred and ten dollars a year. But it almost missed out because of its high literacy rate, another factor in the L.D.C. calculations: Burma's literacy rate is estimated at sixty-six per cent over all and eighty-five per cent in the cities.

Burma's situation is not like that of many of the forty other least-developed countries; there are no matchstick limbs, no swollen stomachs, no people dressed in rags. There are fewer beggars in Rangoon than you see on the streets of New York City. “You look at this country and you compare it to any country in Africa and you see that this isn't a poor country—it's a rich country gone wrong,” a diplomat in Rangoon told me. But no one can be certain that mass starvation won't appear in the future. Rice prices have been soaring; by this September a condensed-milk can filled with rice (the ubiquitous pint-size condensed-milk cans in Burma do double duty as measuring devices) cost five kyats, more than double the price of a year ago and more than four times what it cost before the demonstrations began. One day in Rangoon, I walked through Thaketa, one of the poorest areas—a district of rickety wooden shacks along the bank of the Pazundaung Creek. I spoke with an elderly pensioner living in two tiny rooms with his wife, his son, his daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren. He earns an Army pension of three dollars and twenty cents a month, but that isn't nearly enough to live on, so all seven go out to sell fruits and vegetables on the street. They bring in a combined daily income of between twenty-eight and sixty cents. “We never have enough rice to eat,” he said.

Given the situation in Burma today, it is hard to believe that Rangoon once stood out as a hub of manufacturing, trading, and transportation in southern Asia. “Rangoon is known for its excellent airport, where three major lines converge,” *The National Geographic* reported in 1939. “So many around-the-world aviators and air-minded travelers come this way that it has been predicted that Rangoon will become to the air lanes what Singapore is to sea lanes—a ‘crossroads of the East.’ ” In 1952, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas wrote, “Burma today is one of few bright spots in all of Asia. . . . If Burma has freedom from attack, she will show feudal Asia an alternative to Communism.” From the British period until the early nineteen-sixties, Rangoon was the place to go to escape from the backwaters of Bangkok and Singapore. It had the best bookstores in southern Asia, wonderful food and entertainment, and all the Western magazines.

The answer to how Ne Win brought Burma to economic ruin begins with “The Burmese Way to Socialism,” his astonishingly muddled blueprint for Burma's future, which was published in 1962, less than two months after he seized power. Ne Win's socialism bore a vague similarity to Eastern European Marxism, combined with the xenophobia that demanded the expulsion of the Indian and Chinese managerial class and the rejection of Western investment and expertise. Ne Win called upon his fellow-officers to run Burma's business. “Army officers gave up their ranks and became civilians,” John Badgley, who is the curator of the Southeast Asia collection at the Cornell University Library and an expert on Burma, told me. “As they took over manufacturing and trade, they got the perks—the house, the car, gasoline, a telephone. But nine times out of ten they didn't know what they were doing. The Burmese were having enough trouble making their industry operate without having this intervening layer. Your boss was always someone from the military, and he was in it for the plunder, building on Ne Win's premise that you couldn't trust the Burmese Ph.D.s, who had been educated in the West.”

Making a living in Burma today is an enormously complicated task, generally involving several jobs, not all of them legal. One man in Rangoon, outlining all the business dealings that he was involved in, told me, “You need ten to fifteen kyats a day to buy rice for your family. But a clerk in a government office, depending on his rank, earns between two hundred ten and four hundred kyats a month”—the equivalent of about four to eight dollars. “So his salary probably isn't even enough for rice alone. People need three or four jobs to survive. They may work in government offices, but they will also smuggle, and sell things on the streets at night. You don't do any-



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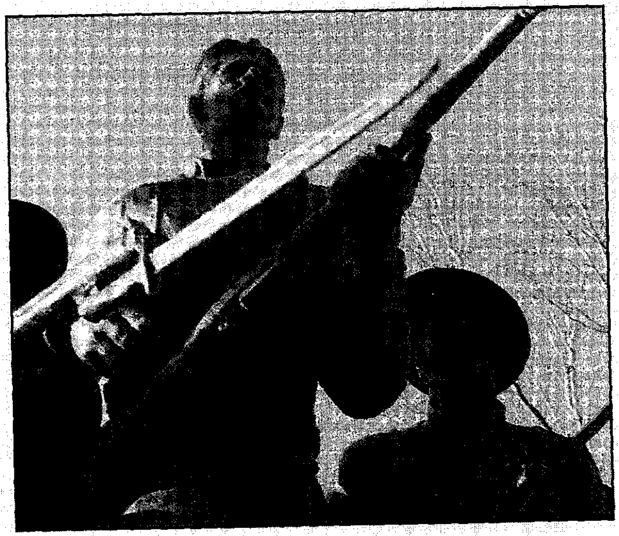

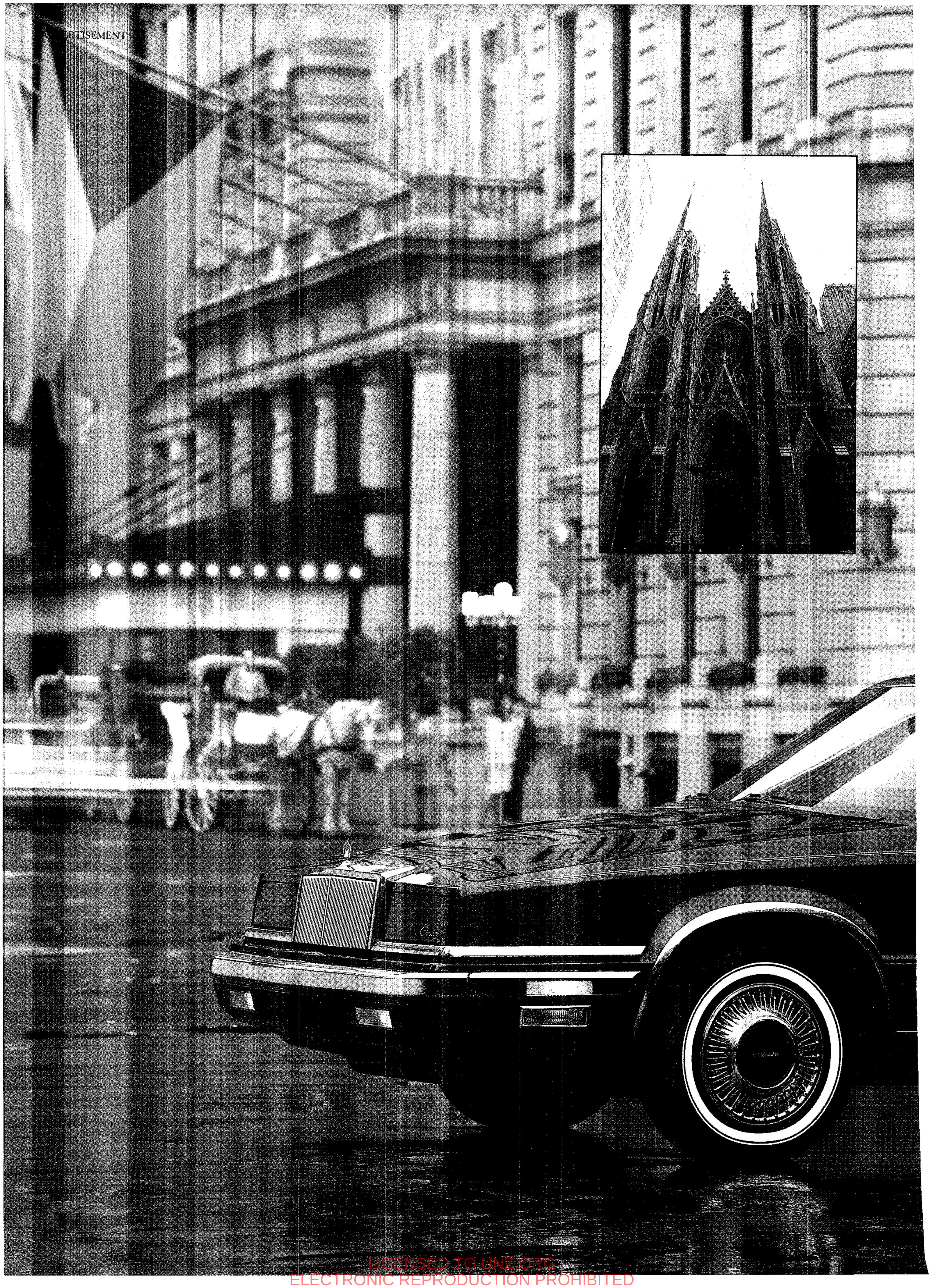

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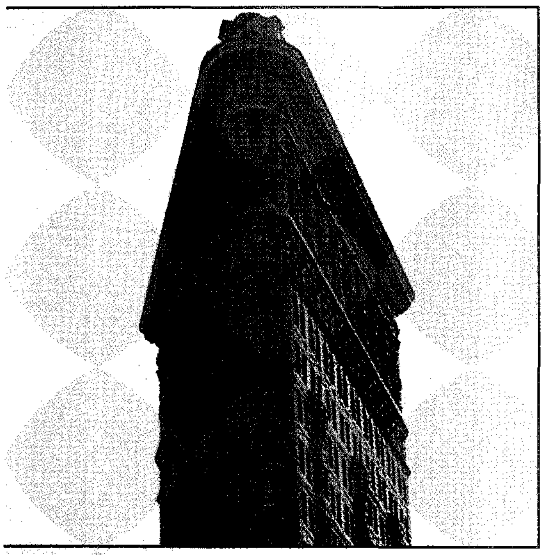

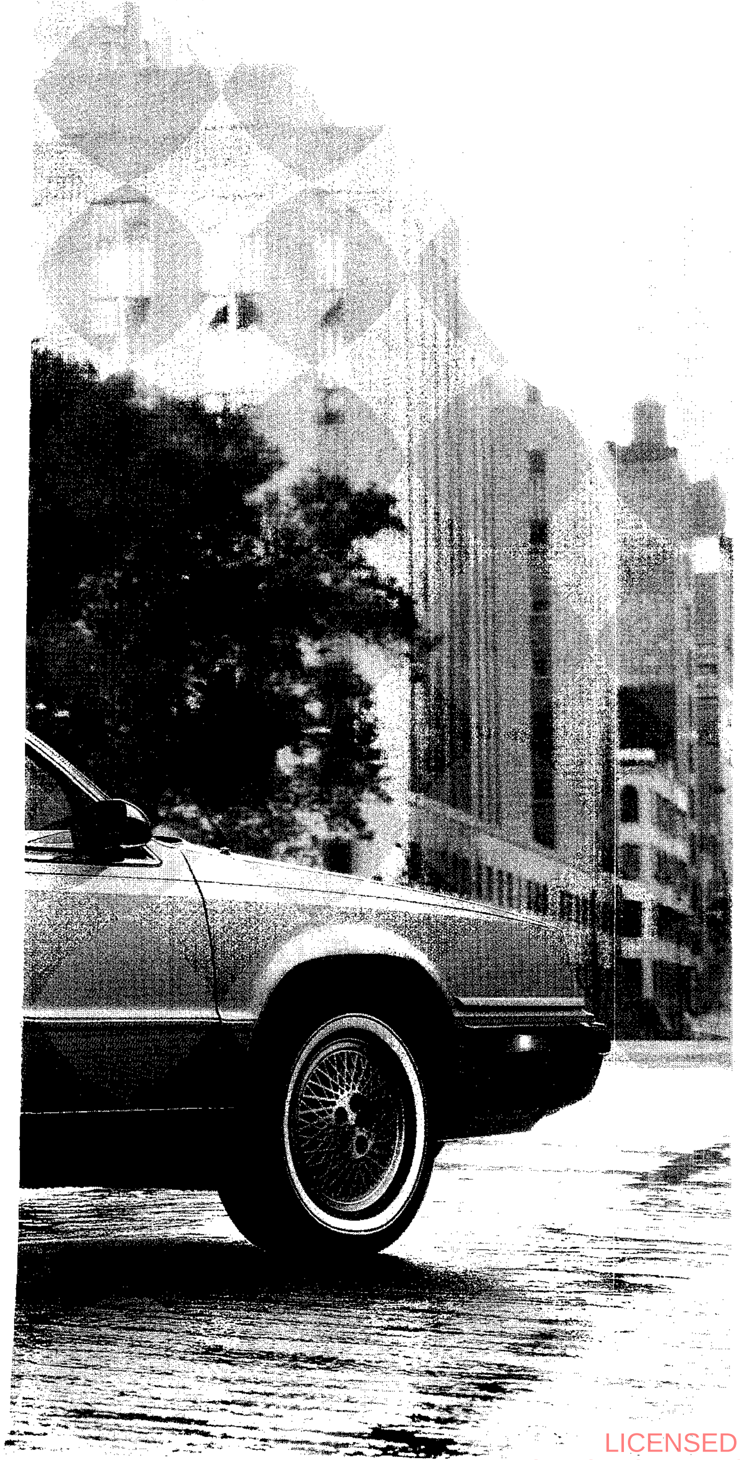

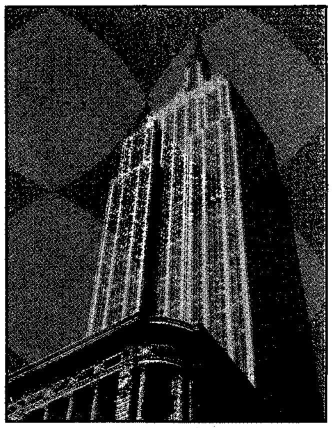

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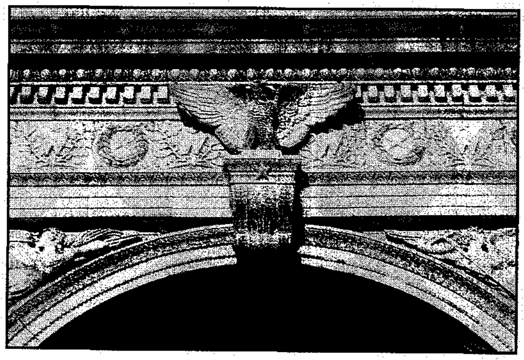

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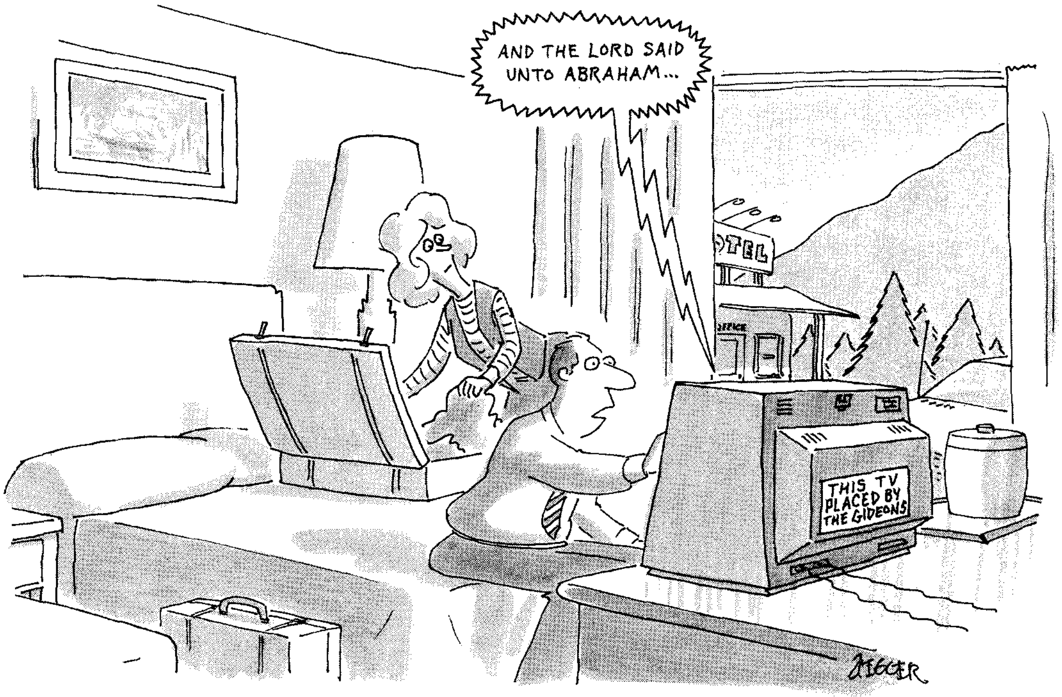
thing in your government job—you just sit there. Nothing happens in government offices; there's nothing to export, nothing to import, no raw materials for factories." This man, like most of the economists, diplomats, students, and others I interviewed in Rangoon, agreed to be quoted only if I didn't use his name. With a few exceptions, Burmese view the appearance of their names in a Western publication as the prelude to a jail sentence.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Because of the faltering economy, a flourishing black market exists in Burma today, and it operates with government connivance. Mingala Bazaar, in Rangoon, offers ten acres of smuggled goods—including clothes, gourmet food, and stereos. The aisles are jammed with shoppers. At Bogyoke Market, in downtown Rangoon, a woman pulled me aside and told me in English about her selection of imported wines. She took me behind the counter and showed me bottles from the United States, France, Australia, Yugoslavia, and Germany. A 1985 Mouton-Cadet from Bordeaux and a 1985 Beaulieu Chablis from California were selling for only four dollars and fifty cents each, indicating the vitality of a black market that could come up with goods for about what they cost in their home countries. Even prescription drugs are now widely available from black-market stalls. Three years ago, I had seen only a few prescription drugs on the black market—the only place where they could be found at all—and most of them had yellowed labels and expiration dates that had long since passed. Now there are entire pharmacies, well stocked with Western medicines. Many of the pharmacies are said to be selling foreign-donated medical supplies that were supposed to go to Burma's hospitals, which had run dangerously low on medicine last summer while treating wounded demonstrators. For instance, last September and October the United Nations Children's Fund sent eighty-three tons of supplies and medicine to Burma, but Dr. Tin Myo Win, who had worked at Rangoon General Hospital until December, told me, "We heard about big shipments of drugs supposedly coming in from overseas, but nothing ever arrived."

There are signs that the government sees the black market as an important safety valve; both government employees and the armed forces freely participate in it. One day, I was about to take a trip to a farming village, and my driver stopped to get gasoline directly in front of the entrance to the compound of the Army unit assigned to protect the leaders of government. A woman pulled out from under a counter several gallon cannisters of gasoline that had been siphoned from Army vehicles. Soldiers walked past all around us, giving the transaction not even a glance, as my driver poured the fuel.

Outright pilferage from the government is common among holders of government jobs. Buses and government vehicles in Rangoon have locked hoods so that drivers can't steal engine parts to sell on the black market; if you need access to the engine, you have to call a special number to have a government service vehicle dispatched. "The Burmese are ingenious at making things run, but only when it's for the family," John Badgley says. "No one makes things run for the state. The tradition of bureaucracy is an alien tradition." The difference between working for the family and working for the state became abundantly clear when I decided one night to have dinner at my hotel, the Kandawgyi, a state-run enterprise on the shores of Royal Lake. My previous dinners had been at Rangoon's privately owned Chinese restaurants, where the menus offered dozens of choices, service was excellent, and the food was both good and bounteous. (There's not a single Burmese restaurant in Rangoon—a reflection on the extent to which the Chinese continue to control parts of the economy despite Ne Win's efforts. If you want Burmese food—an interesting cuisine based on mild, aromatic curries—you have to buy it from a sidewalk vender or get invited to someone's home.) I chose to try my hotel for dinner because of what I had witnessed each morning at breakfast. All the cooks—about a dozen—would change to chef's whites, put on their toques, and march single file through the dining room to the kitchen. Since the cooks seemed to outnumber the hotel guests, and looked so dazzlingly professional, I presented myself for dinner. I asked the waiter for a menu, but he said there was none; I could have fish, pork, chicken, or beef. I selected fish, and he went away, but soon came back to ask what I had ordered. Five minutes later, he appeared with a plate

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bearing a small piece of beef, accompanied by French fries and vegetables, which both tasted of rancid oil. I would probably have done far better at the chefs' homes, for that was in all probability where the fresh cooking oil ended up.

The complexity of some of the black-market activities is so impressive that it is easy to imagine how prosperous Burma could become if the government allowed the entrepreneurial talent to be directed into legal channels. "These chaps are really organizational geniuses," a Western diplomat in Rangoon says. "If they could be brought into the legal fold, they'd have this country going in short order." Smuggling goods over the border—rice goes to Bangladesh, and teak, minerals, and gems go to Thailand and China, while consumer goods and hard currency come in to Burma—is such an efficient operation that the smuggled goods sell on the Burmese black market for little more than they would cost in Bangkok. One economist calculates that the black market must be at least as big as Burma's entire official economy.

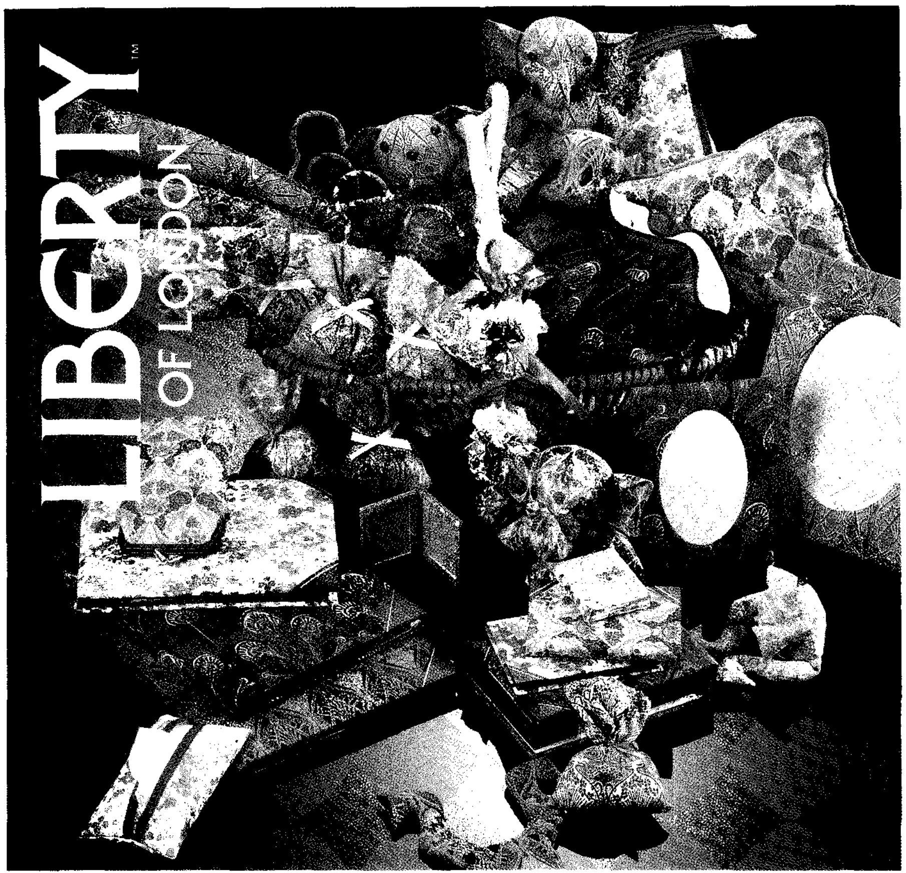
Then there's the opium trade. The State Department has calculated that this year Burma will produce almost half the world's supply of opium. Opium production and opium smuggling today are largely in the hands of the Burmese Communist Party—it has found drug running a far more profitable activity than promoting an ideology—and of a Shan State army that is a private enterprise of a notorious drug lord, Khun Sa. (The Karens and the Kachins, two of the other largest minority groups, aren't involved in the opium trade. They get their revenues by taxing goods being smuggled into and out of Thailand.) The mountainous Shan State, in eastern Burma, provides some of the world's best terrain for the cultivation of opium poppies. Khun Sa—who has a vacation house in Chiang Mai, Thailand, complete with turrets and barbed wire, that occupies an entire city block—has enraged the Burmese government on several occasions by inviting foreign reporters for interviews and press conferences, at which he announces that he would be willing to sell his entire opium crop to the United States government, which could then destroy it.

American efforts in this area have been the subject of considerable controversy. In the nineteen-fifties, the Central Intelligence Agency armed Kuomintang troops who had fled to Burma after the Communist victory in China, the idea being that they could make border raids back into China. Instead, the troops used the American arms to protect the Nationalist Chinese opium-smuggling trade. In recent years—from 1985 until the cutoff of American aid after last September's massacre—the United States had been supplying the Burmese Army with helicopters, planes, and herbicides for a program of aerial spraying of poppy fields, but supporters of the minority groups charged that Rangoon was unwilling to risk flying those planes to the major opium-growing areas, and instead used the herbicides to poison vegetable crops in the villages of the ethnic minorities fighting the government.

Over the past two years, with the economy in disarray and foreign-exchange reserves desperately low, the Burmese government has been making some moves to reform the economy. But very few deals are being concluded, in part because the reforms haven't gone nearly far enough. There is still no private banking system, and the government—at the insistence of Ne Win, according to one report—sticks with the ludicrously low rate of six and a half kyats to the dollar for official transactions. The only suggestion of economic progress so far is a trade agreement with Thailand, which was negotiated last December when Thailand broke an international boycott of Burma and sent its top military officer, General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, to Rangoon. The benefits from that agreement are dubious at best. Logging concessions were sold to Thai companies for a pittance, according to most reports, and the sale of fishing rights caused more than a hundred Burmese fishing vessels to lie idle as the Thais moved in with their sophisticated equipment. But the agreement was to prove much more profitable for both Thailand and for General Chavalit personally. According to a high-ranking diplomat familiar with the transaction, Chavalit's wife owned a share of one of the logging companies that would benefit from the deal, while his son had an interest in one of the fisheries affected. In January—after Thailand had locked in these valuable concessions for Burmese teak—the

Thai government announced that for environmental reasons it was banning all logging in Thailand. A Western economist told me the price of teak quickly shot up from nineteen hundred dollars a metric ton to ten thousand dollars. In return for the logging and fishing concessions, the Burmese government got more than ten million dollars in badly needed hard currency that could be used to keep its army supplied. It also got an agreement on Thailand's part to repatriate many of the students who had fled from Burma. "The Thais have already raped their own environment," a Western diplomat in Rangoon says. "There's not a fish left in the Gulf of Siam. Now you're going to get that here. And you're not going to have a stand of timber left in Burma within ten years."

NE WIN may have led the economy into ruin, but until last year he was more successful politically. He transformed Burma into an oppressive military dictatorship, but it was a police state with a relatively quiescent population. The people certainly had reason to rebel, almost from the beginning of Ne Win's rule. All forms of communication—books, magazines, plays, movies, music—were under strict government control and censorship. Anyone criticizing the government in public or in private was subject to arrest. The government abolished almost every kind of entertainment, and political meetings were the only way for people to get together. Civil liberties were unknown. In 1988, Amnesty International protested the long-term detention of thirty-four Muslims of Bengali origin on suspicion of being illegal immigrants; for this crime, some of them had been in jail for thirty-one years. The organization also issued a seventy-one-page report titled "Burma: Extrajudicial Execution and Torture of Members of Ethnic Minorities," which said, "Victims were shot in the head or heart most commonly, also stabbed to death, had their throats cut, drowned, strangled, hanged or beaten to death . . . farmers [were] shot down for being in their fields tending crops; the Burmese wanted them to stay in the villages. Often their eyes were gouged out." Arrests could come at any time, for any reason or for no reason at all, and no one was immune. Shortly after I returned from Burma, I had dinner at a



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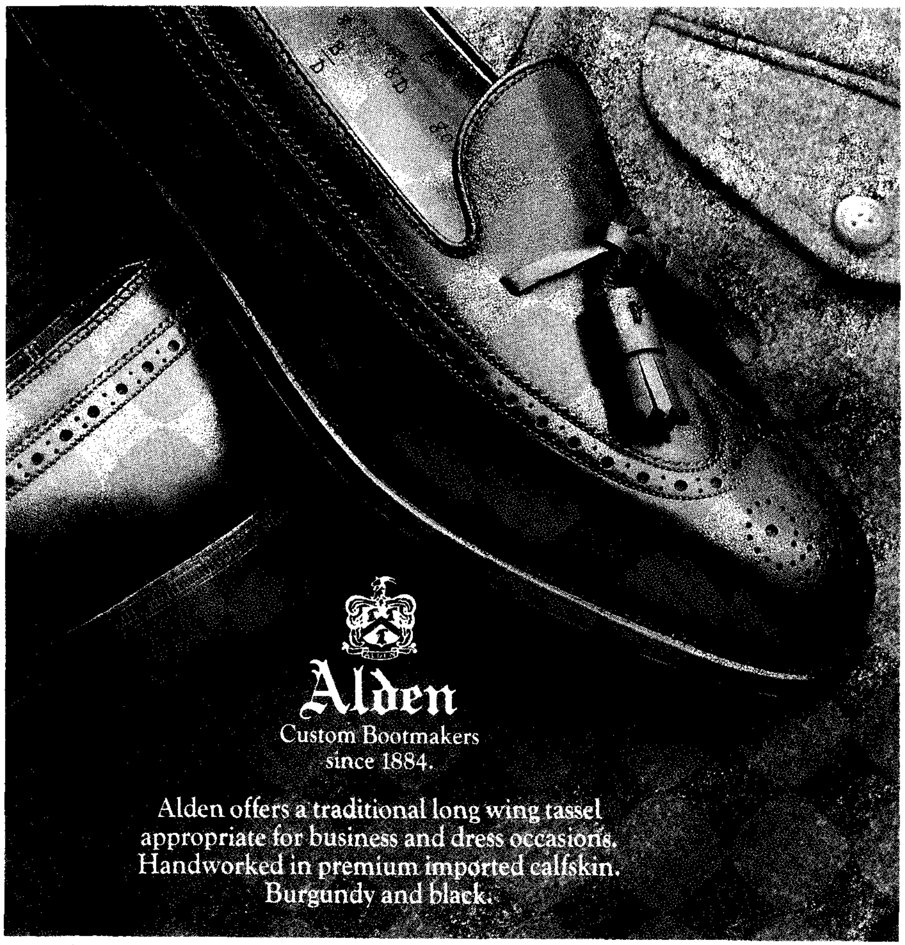
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"Good heavens—a chicken nugget!"

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Burmese restaurant in San Francisco and fell into conversation with the owner. He had been an architect in Burma, he said, and in the nineteen-sixties he had gone to a city in the Irrawaddy delta to design a headquarters building for the local military commander. Just at that time, the commander fell out of favor with Ne Win, and was arrested. The authorities decided that they might as well arrest his architect, too; the architect was thrown into jail and held for two and a half years—seven months in solitary confinement—and during that time his family was not informed of his whereabouts.

Despite the government provocations, before late 1987 there were only two major disturbances in Burma. The first came in 1962, just four months after Ne Win's coup, when students demonstrated against strict new regulations at Rangoon University. Ne Win responded in a manner that became characteristic of his rule: he sent the military in to shoot students. Some reports say that hundreds were killed. The following day, the Army blew up the student-union building on the campus, which had been an important symbol of Burmese nationalism since the nineteen-thirties.

The second and more severe uprising came with the funeral of U Thant, in Rangoon, in 1974. U Thant, the most famous of all Burmese, was actually a relatively minor figure in his country until he rose to prominence at the United Nations. He was the headmaster of a provincial school before the Second World War, and in 1954 he became the chief of staff and close confidant of U Nu. Three years later, U Nu appointed him Burmese Ambassador to the U.N. Since Burma was probably the most neutral country on earth, he was the perfect compromise candidate to head the U.N., and in 1961 he became Secretary-General. His fortuitous presence in New York no doubt saved him from being jailed along with his friend U Nu when Ne Win seized power. U Thant died in New York, in November of 1974, and his family brought his body to Rangoon for burial. His grandson Thant Myint-U, who was then nine years old, remembers what happened. "When we went from the airport to the Turf Club grounds, where he was to lie in state, there were tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, lining the roads," he told me. "That scared the government. They wanted to get the funeral over with as quickly as possible. But the people wanted a monument, not just burial in a cemetery. The day of the funeral, thousands of students and monks surrounded the coffin, lifted it from the hearse, and put it in a taxi, and they took it to the campus of Rangoon University. There were flowers all over the place. Women were taking off their jewelry and donating it for the construction of the monument. Four or five days after we arrived, the military attacked the university, at four in the morning. Hundreds of students were bayonetted, many to death. U Thant was buried under ten feet of concrete near the Shwedagon Pagoda. There were riots for the next few days, but they were suppressed under martial law, and the government asked our family to leave the country."

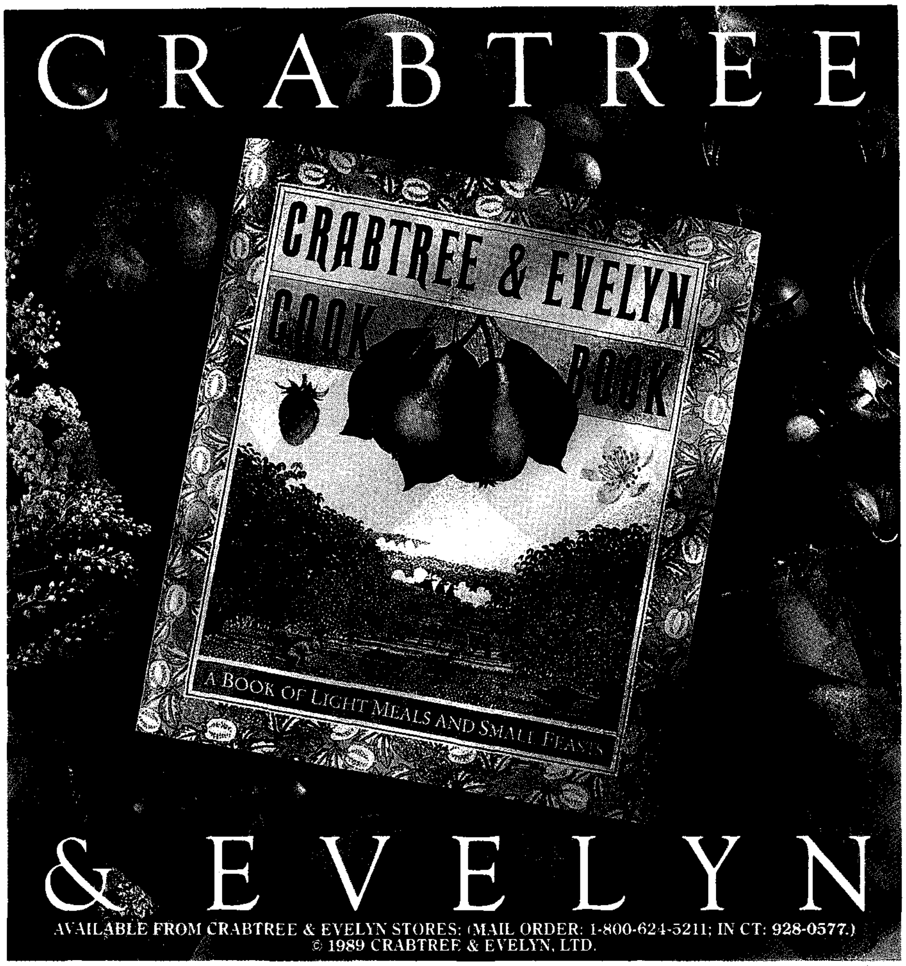
U Thant got a monument, of sorts. I visited his mausoleum in April—a depressing concrete building with a steel grating through which one can see the thick concrete slab that serves as his grave. The ceiling is near collapse, the floor is filthy, the grounds are strewn with rubble. In contrast to the rest of Rangoon, this structure was left unpainted after last September's massacre.

Ne Win's ability to impose three decades of tyranny on Burma, interrupted by so few protests, can be explained in part by the tenets of Burma's form of Buddhism. "The word I use to explain people's respect for Ne Win is 'thrall,' or 'awe' in the classic sense, referring to God," John Badgley says. "The Burmese believe that the power a ruler exercises is a function of the merit he was born with. Ne Win has accumulated merit from a previous existence—people know he has, or he couldn't have held power for so long. There's a great fear of doing damage to him. The basic perception of power is that power is used more frequently for bad things than for good things. The primary purpose of life is suffering; the reason people want to get to

Nirvana, the afterlife, is to avoid this suffering." But, while there is reverential respect for Ne Win in the armed forces, he has never left anything to chance. He has given enormous power to subordinates—particularly the heads of the secret police—and then suddenly removed them, often to jail.

In 1983, Brigadier General Tin Oo, who was once the head of military intelligence and Ne Win's heir apparent, was unexpectedly ousted and put in jail. His alleged crime was misusing government money. Today another powerful military-intelligence chief, Brigadier General Khin Nyunt, waits in the wings, the most likely candidate to run Burma if Ne Win decides to abort the elections promised for next year. The fifty-one-year-old Khin Nyunt, who was a colonel only last August, has been given enormous power to pry into the affairs of influential generals many years older than himself; such is a typical Ne Win tactic for keeping subordinates off balance.

In view of the presumably untouchable status of Ne Win, it seems strange that the entire nation would turn against him, as it did a year ago. But the year before that an event took place so devastating and so bizarre that even the long-suffering Burmese could suffer quietly no longer. In September of 1987, the government suddenly declared that the three highest-denomination banknotes—seventy-five, thirty-five, and twenty-five kyats—would thenceforth be worthless, and would be replaced by ninety-kyat and forty-five-kyat bills. You couldn't cash in the old notes; you couldn't exchange them; overnight their value was reduced to that of scrap paper. The decree eliminated fifty-six per cent of the money in circulation and wiped out the entire savings of many Burmese. Almost no one in Burma keeps money in banks; to withdraw money from a bank account, you have to stand in line half a day, and if the withdrawal is more than the equivalent of two hundred dollars you must see the authorities and convince them that you have a good reason to want your cash. Not surprisingly, most savings accounts in Burma have long consisted of banknotes hidden at home, often buried in locked boxes. Now there were no more savings: students had no money to go to school; people squirrelling away an occasional bill for a radio, a TV set, or a fan were back to zero overnight. No one had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advance word of the change—not even the Army. When I interviewed a retired Army colonel in Rangoon, he said that he himself had lost the equivalent of sixteen hundred dollars. A Western diplomat in Rangoon said, "Ne Win caught everybody—his ministers, everybody. The Army got an extra month's salary, but that was it."

Three explanations for the change have been offered, but two of them—to control inflation and to punish black marketeers—make no sense. While wiping out more than half a nation's money supply should in principle prove deflationary, in Burma it had the opposite effect. Because no one trusted money anymore, every kyat earned from then on went into land and tangible goods, and prices soared instead of dropping. "The result was that the urban dweller would buy anything—land, rice cookers, whatever—fearing another demonetization," one economist says. "So if it was an effort to control inflation, instead Ne Win created more." As for punishing black marketeers, the demonetization created such a frenzy for material goods that the black market actually prospered. The third is the most likely explanation, in that it seems characteristic of Ne Win: he replaced the largest bills with notes worth ninety and forty-five kyats because he is fascinated by the number nine. Ne Win has had a lifelong infatuation with numerology, and much of what happens in Burma turns out to be closely related to the number nine. The Army takeover of the puppet civilian government, which led to the massacre of the students the next day, occurred last September 18th, the eighteenth day of the ninth month. Armed Forces Day is celebrated on March 27th. When the government allowed political parties to register in preparation for next year's promised election, the parties in the ninth, eighteenth, and twenty-seventh slots were affiliated with the government. Why the number nine? A Western diplomat who speaks Burmese says, "The number nine is not just lucky. It is a powerful number, which has to be conquered. Otherwise it's a danger to you."

Few Burmese proved willing to conquer the number nine by holding ninety-kyat and forty-five-kyat notes; they were afraid to accept them, fearing another demonetization. I saw many people in Rangoon pay their checks in restaurants with huge wads of small-kyat notes. One man I spoke with needed to take a hundred thousand kyats with him on a train trip to buy smuggled gems; he carried a big shopping bag full of small-denomination bills onto the train. An economist told me that he knows people who need large sums of money and now devote an entire room of their house to the storage of cash.

For the Burmese people, who had suffered one indignity after another over the years, the arbitrary decree that wiped out their savings was too much.

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Demonetization marked the first time in Ne Win's rule that people spilled out into the streets at regular intervals to protest. If Ne Win's fascination with the number nine was the original cause, an equally unusual event in March of 1988 added to last year's trauma. At a tea shop near the Rangoon Institute of Technology, students began arguing with workers about which music tape to play, and the two sides came to blows. The police were summoned and reacted savagely, clubbing both male and female students to the ground and killing one. Some students placed under arrest were crammed into a police van. It sat for hours in the heat, and forty-one students suffocated.

These deaths apparently shocked even Ne Win, for he apologized publicly for them in July. (There is some debate, however, about whether Ne Win was disturbed more by the deaths or by the fact that the news of the suffocations had been kept from him.) They also produced more rioting on the streets of Rangoon, and during these riots the death toll rose into the hundreds. Diplomats reported that the police brutality in March was a key factor in the extension of the students' base of support to other elements of society. Then, on June 21st, came another battle between students and police; this one started when a thousand students marched to downtown Rangoon after a political-protest meeting in front of Convocation Hall, on the Rangoon University campus. According to a State Department report, several hundred students may have been killed by the police, and "in one instance, police drove three trucks into a group of peacefully demonstrating high-school students, killing four or five." The government responded to this protest by shutting all the universities in the country; a few weeks later, it closed all the schools.

Although primary and middle-level schools were allowed to reopen this summer, high schools and universities are still shut down. Each day for the last year, faculty members at Rangoon University wishing to be paid and to keep their position have had to show up at the campus, in northern Rangoon, at eight-thirty in the morning. They display an I.D. card, sign in, and pass through a small gate of the fenced-off campus. At three-thirty in the afternoon, they sign out.

On July 23rd last year, Ne Win spoke to a special session of his Burma Socialist Program Party in Rangoon. "Since I am indirectly responsible for the March and June affairs, and because of my advanced age, I am resigning from the Party chairmanship and also as a member," he told the delegates. He said that a referendum would be held within two months to determine whether the people wanted a multiparty system, and that if it was found that they did elections would follow. "Whatever the results of the referendum and whatever the new government, I will completely retire from politics," he said. These remarks were not to be taken at face value, as they would be if they were made in a Western country. Instead, they represented the start of an elaborate charade. It was what John Badgley calls Burmese theatre—a play that cost thousands of lives, plunged Burma into chaos, and resulted in a police state more repressive than anything ever before seen in the country. Ne Win directed the drama from his "retirement" home on the shores of Inya Lake.

Any possibility that Ne Win's presumed retirement was meant to be a conciliatory gesture was immediately shattered when people learned that his successor as head of state was to be General Sein Lwin, perhaps the single most hated man in Burma. Sein Lwin, who is nicknamed the Butcher, had directed the three most repressive acts of Ne Win's regime: the blowing up of the student union in 1962, the bloodbath after U Thant's funeral in 1974, and the putting down of the demonstrations in March of 1988. Within two weeks of his ascension, tens of thousands of Burmese took to the streets in Rangoon, Mandalay, and other cities. A State Department

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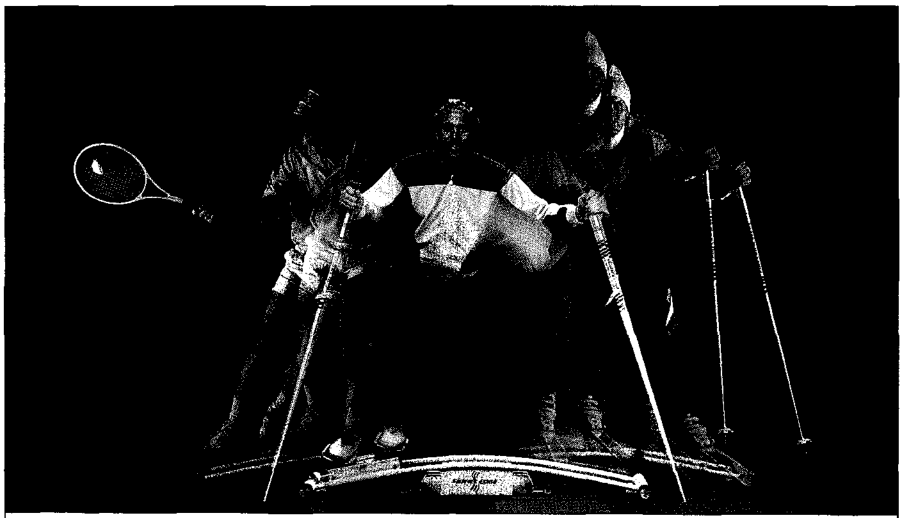

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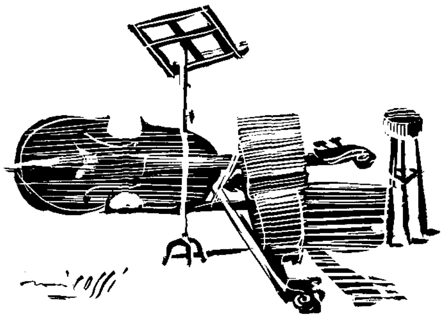
human-rights report issued in February of this year describes what happened between August 8th and August 13th:

> Troops opened fire on peaceful, unarmed citizens protesting Sein Lwin's ascension to power. Numerous eyewitness accounts confirm that troops chased and killed fleeing demonstrators and fired indiscriminately at onlookers and into houses. On August 10, troops fired into a group of doctors, nurses, and others in front of Rangoon General Hospital, killing or wounding several doctors and nurses, who were pleading with troops to stop shooting. . . . Four separate eyewitness accounts of an August 10 incident in North Okkalapa, a working-class suburb of Rangoon, describe in detail how soldiers knelt in formation and fired repeatedly at demonstrators in response to an army captain's orders. The first casualties were five or six teen-age girls who carried flags and a photograph of Burma's assassinated founding father, Aung San. All four eyewitnesses reported large numbers of dead and wounded and estimated several hundred casualties on the scene. Eyewitnesses report similar incidents throughout Rangoon during the August 8-13 period. Deaths probably numbered over two thousand, but actual numbers can never be known. In many cases as soon as they finished firing, troops carted off victims for surreptitious mass disposal in order to mask the extent of the carnage.

During this period, Dr. Tin Myo Win was working as a surgeon at Rangoon General Hospital; he had earlier been a leader in a move by doctors and nurses to protest the government's shooting of demonstrators. He agreed to see me during my April visit to Rangoon and actually insisted that his name be used. Dr. Tin Myo Win, who is thirty-seven, has never been outside Burma, but he speaks fluent English in a brisk, professional manner. This is how he described one of the incidents he witnessed during the demonstrations against Sein Lwin: "It was eleven at night on August 12th, and two trucks came up to the hospital, driven by soldiers. There were bodies of students piled in the back. Some had been shot at two or three in the afternoon, and they were being brought to the hospital only now. The soldiers wouldn't listen to my protests about the delay; they said they knew nothing about it and were only following orders. So I asked my internes to go out to the trucks and check if anyone was alive. It was a grisly scene searching through dead bodies to find a live one. Some people had been shot in the stomach and their guts had spilled out. The internes would pull at a leg and try to find what body it was attached to. Out of forty people, twelve were still alive. We managed to save four of them."

The hospital was badly understocked then, and the situation only got worse as the demonstrations continued through mid-September. "I worked at Rangoon General Hospital nearly ten years," Dr. Tin Myo Win said. "In all that time, in every area—drugs, facilities, books—we didn't have enough. There was a shortage of anesthetic gases, so we had to use spinal anesthesia. There weren't enough scissors for surgeries. There weren't enough knives. The X-ray machines had no film, and we had to go to the black market for it. The only antibiotic the hospital stocked was penicillin. If a patient needed drugs, we had to send the family out to the black market to buy them. If they didn't have enough money, the patient had to suffer; sometimes the surgery was successful but the patient died for lack of drugs. There were no textbooks for medical students; they had to depend on lecture notes. For four hundred students studying surgery, there were just four clinical tutors to take them on rounds at the hospital. Some of my students are now working as specialists at the two military hospitals. They have all the drugs and equipment they need." In December, Dr. Tin Myo Win left Rangoon General Hospital to practice surgery at a private clinic. "Many of the doctors were forced to resign, nurses also, because they had participated in peaceful demonstrations," he told me. "I knew they would kick me out, so I resigned first. Now many of the professors of medicine and the medical specialists are leaving the country."

Sein Lwin's tactics to end the demonstrations had failed, and on August 19th (the sum of the digits 8/19 is divisible by 9) Ne Win ordered another change of government. Sein Lwin, the hardest of the hard-liners among Ne Win's associates, was replaced by U Maung Maung, the most conciliatory. Maung Maung, who had been Attorney General in Ne Win's Cabinet, was unique in the government in that he had had a Western education. He had studied law in London and Holland and had taught for two years at Yale. He was the author of a biography of Ne Win, and had also written for magazines, including the American magazine *The Nation*. Maung Maung now offered a plan for elections within three months, and the parliament named several elderly men connected with the government to supervise the voting. The opposition leaders turned down the election proposal, demanding that instead Maung Maung resign and appoint an interim government to oversee any elections. No one trusted Maung Maung, who had so long been a close and loyal Ne Win associate, and no one seriously believed that Ne Win wasn't still in control.



DURING Maung Maung's tenure, which lasted just a month, something extraordinary happened to Burma, and no one really knows why. As demonstrators took to the streets to demand democracy, the government slowly stopped functioning. At first, lines of soldiers looked on at the protests but took no action; after a few days, the soldiers rolled up the barbed-wire barricades, drove away in their trucks, and were no longer to be seen. The students and the monks, who had bravely borne the Army's clubs and bullets all year, now found themselves joined in their demonstrations by doctors, lawyers, film stars, journalists, and, most important, masses of workers. And then government officials left their offices and marched in the parades. Finally, some policemen and personnel from the Air Force and the Navy came over, to the cheers of the crowd. Half a million euphoric Burmese paraded through the streets of Rangoon, passing deserted government offices. The center of the demonstrations was the American Embassy. When the Ambassador, Burton Levin, rode in his official car, with American flags flying on the fenders, the crowds would applaud; as the Burmese knew, the United States had been the first nation to condemn the brutal killings under Sein Lwin in early August. Every day, speeches were made on the street in front of the Embassy. The theme of the speeches was democracy, and America became the symbol of

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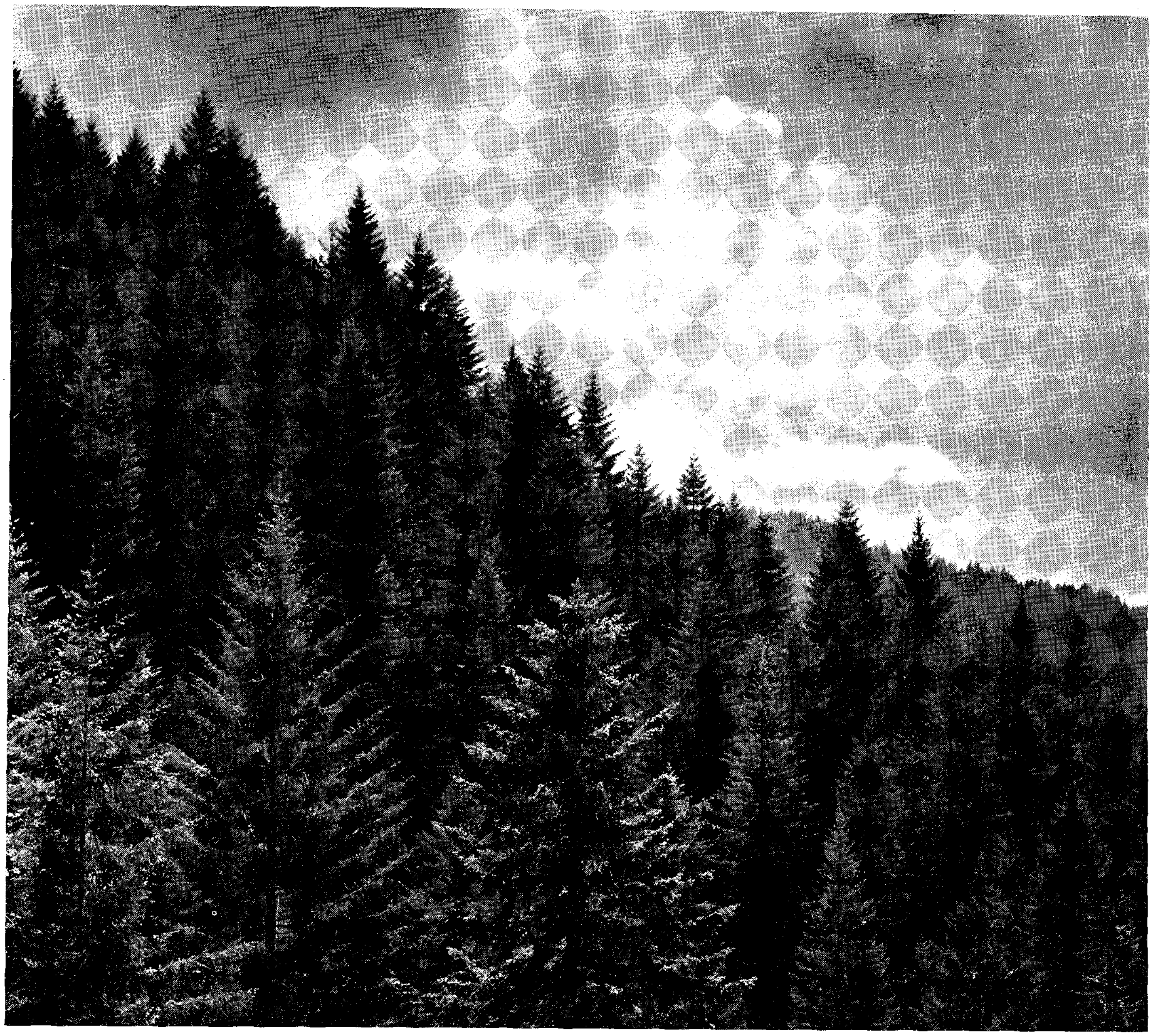

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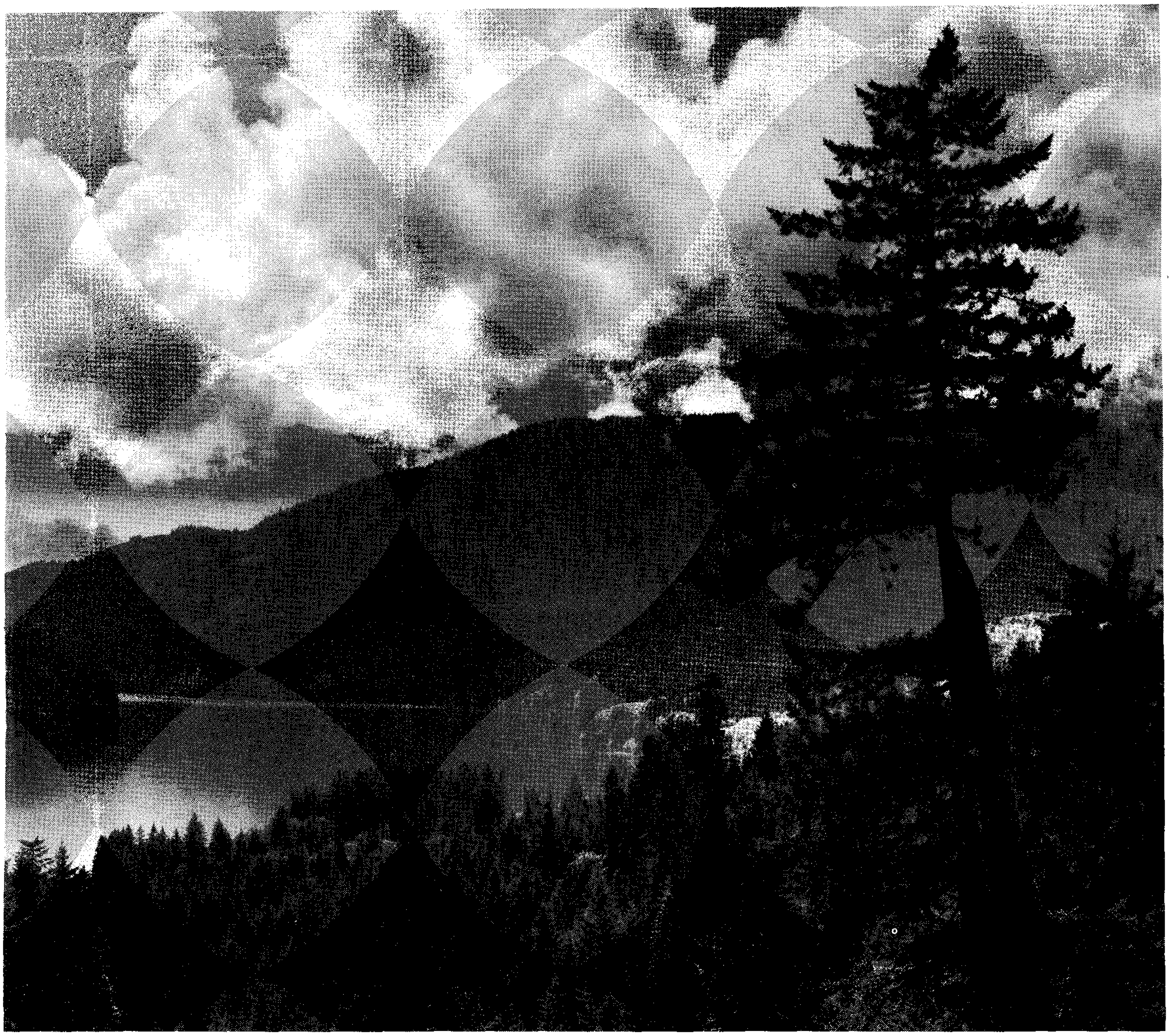

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everything the Burmese wanted and lacked. Some demonstrators carried the American flag, and at one point a group of students came to the front door of the Embassy and recited the Gettysburg Address word for word in English.

And suddenly, after three decades of strict censorship, Burma had a free press. Springing up out of nowhere were dozens of newspapers, which offered a stark contrast to the solemn gray *Working People's Daily*. In July, the *Working People's Daily* had on its front page stories like "PRESIDENT U SAN YU SENDS FELICITATIONS TO EGYPT." (The presidency of Burma became a figurehead position when Ne Win gave it up, in 1981.) By the end of August, people were reading very different sorts of news. In Rangoon, I looked through dozens of these newspapers, and also some magazines that had appeared during the same period. The newly liberated journalists had lost no time in taking advantage of the unprecedented opportunity to attack Ne Win. "KING OF THE WOMANIZERS," said a headline in one paper, and it noted in an accompanying article that "he married a little girl the same age as his daughter." A comic strip showing Ne Win at a lectern, first smiling sweetly and then firing a gun, bore the captions "Sincerity and kindness are very good," "Love and friendship are the way of human beings," and "But my hobby is killing." One newspaper was entirely in Burmese except for a huge English-language headline: "WANTED DIE OR ALIVE NGA MYAING." U Nga Myaing is Ne Win's astrologer, and many Burmese blame his advice for prolonging Ne Win's life. Even the official *Working People's Daily*, which each day publishes one issue in English and one in Burmese, started covering news more objectively. By the end of August, it was running headlines like "PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE WITH CALLS FOR DEMOCRACY."

But below the euphoria lay a threat. If the government had stopped functioning, the secret police—the Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence—hadn't got the message. "The D.D.S.I. had people everywhere," a Western diplomat says. "There were lots of signs that they were very concerned about what everyone was doing. They would interrogate people for hours. They were at the airport supervising customs; they were suspicious of what the diplomats were bringing in." A second bad sign was an absence of leadership among the protesters. The students were the force behind "people power," but now that they were getting some freedom they had no idea what to do with it.

In April, I discussed this with Yuzana Khin, who, as treasurer of the All-Burma Federation of Students' Unions, was by then one of the highest-ranking student leaders not dead or in jail. A second-year psychology student at Rangoon University, she was in hiding in Bangkok when I saw her. (Somewhere between a thousand and two thousand Burmese students fled across the border to Thailand, and several hundred ended up in Bangkok. Six thousand took refuge with the Mon and Karen ethnic minorities, in rebel-held territory adjacent to the Thai border.) "We knew that no constructive change could come under this regime," she told me. "But we felt that we had little knowledge of the outside world. We wanted to overthrow the government and hand power over to those who could create a new government. We held meetings all day, but the meetings were just to plan the overthrow of the government." The opposition, however, was far too fragmented: when U Nu, by then eighty-two years old and in poor health, attempted to organize an interim government, the idea got nowhere. Aung San Suu Kyi, who was later to become the leading opposition figure, didn't achieve a power base until after the September massacre. It was only on August 26th that she made her first public appearance. As for the students, they operated under a dream—that the United States would intervene to save Burma. "We hoped to form an interim government and get arms and ammunition, or even troops, from America," Yuzana Khin said.

On September 11th, I was able to meet Yuzana Khin once more, this time in a very different atmosphere. After a nine-month effort and the vigorous help of Representative Stephen J. Solarz and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, she finally got a visa to the United States, and I saw her at San Francisco Airport, where she was on her way to a new life as a student in Washington, D.C. A week before she arrived, the New York *Times* had published an editorial about the hostility the United States was showing the Burmese students who had fled to Thailand; in some cases, the American Embassy in Bangkok was recommending that they go back to Rangoon to get the necessary documents—advice that could possibly lead to their execution. "While the Bush Administration provides sanctuary to endangered Chinese democrats, it cold-shoulders those from Myanmar," the *Times* said. "Washington rebuffed student pleas to prevent Thailand from sending them home. Why? Is it because Washington wants Burmese Army coöperation in drug interdiction? Rampant corruption makes that army a dubious partner. There are even reports of Noriega-style links between officers and drug kingpins. Or is the State Department worried about offending Thailand, which has new and lucrative business links with Myanmar?"

The students in Rangoon during the summer of last year seized on every scrap of hope that the United States would intervene. Representative Solarz, the head of the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, became something of a national hero in Burma when a resolution he sponsored in support of the students passed the House. A false story that circulated widely in Rangoon described an attempt by Ambassador Levin to deliver a gift of medical supplies to Rangoon General Hospital: a student told me in elaborate detail how Levin had risked his life facing down a hostile soldier at the hospital's gate. And a headline in one underground newspaper said, on September 15th, "AMERICAN FLEET STARTS INVADING BURMESE WATERS."

Refreshing as rebellion must have seemed to the students and to others, it lacked a strong ideological foundation.

The students had only the vaguest idea of what democracy meant; they hadn't travelled in the West, and they had experienced nothing for their entire lives but Burma under Ne Win. They knew what they were against—socialism and communism, because the economic systems of both smacked too strongly of Ne Win's Burma. They knew what they wanted—freedom, as exemplified by the United States. And that was enough. "I'm surprised that you come from America and ask why I want democracy," a seventy-year-old rice miller in a farming village said to me with disdain. "Everybody knows the difference between democracy and socialism: in socialist countries, you get only guns and bullets. It's not only city people; we country people know it." On a table in his house was a book translated into Burmese and distributed by the United States Information Service—the autobiography of Lee Iacocca.

Besides the increase in activity of the secret police, another unsettling event occurred in Rangoon during this month of freedom. Over the week of August 21st, the government emptied the nation's prisons; doors were unlocked, and the prisoners were free to leave. Those who maintain that the events of this month were scripted by Ne Win cite the release of prisoners as a prime piece of evidence. The intent, they say, was to destabilize Rangoon to the point where calling in the troops would be a necessity. If that was the plan, it proved entirely successful. In order to survive, the prisoners, lacking jobs and money, did the one thing they knew how to do: they committed crimes. Looters plundered government warehouses and factories; thieves were seen carrying air-conditioners and office equipment away from the Rangoon headquarters of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Nor did only prisoners participate in such activities. A student who witnessed the lootings told me, "People had been struggling for survival at the same time that government officials had got privileges at special shops. So now that they had the opportunity they destroyed the shops and sold the goods along the road. The first day of the lootings, I saw a twenty-inch television set on sale for seventy-five dollars and a litre of Johnnie Walker for one dollar. People called the area where they were selling the stolen goods the Sein Lwin market." For protection from the criminals, neighborhoods blocked the streets with bamboo barricades. Each block had its own committee, which organized patrols. The market in *jinglees*—sharpened bicycle spokes that are shot from slingshots—boomed. Angry crowds in neighborhoods set upon suspected government informers, and some were beheaded.

During this period, with Burma closed to journalists and tourists, news was reaching the outside world largely from the Western embassies in Rangoon; the diplomats were interviewed over the telephone each day by reporters stationed in Bangkok. But there was no news at all from Mandalay. The fact is that Mandalay—through the efforts of its monks, who have always had a vast influence there—completely escaped the looting that was plaguing Rangoon. The monks demonstrated that the "law and order" that Burmese authorities have always talked about is possible without repression. I discovered what had happened

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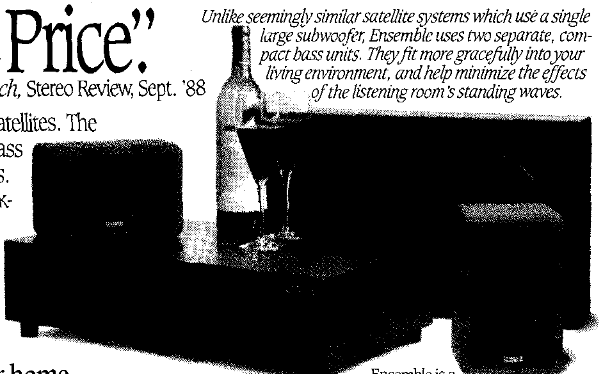

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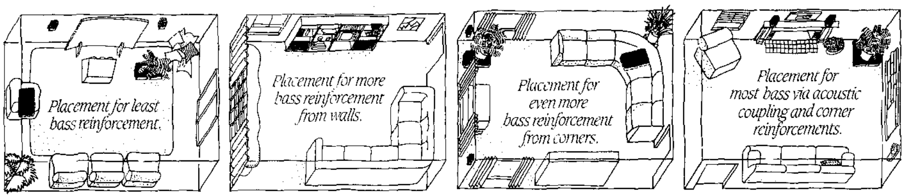
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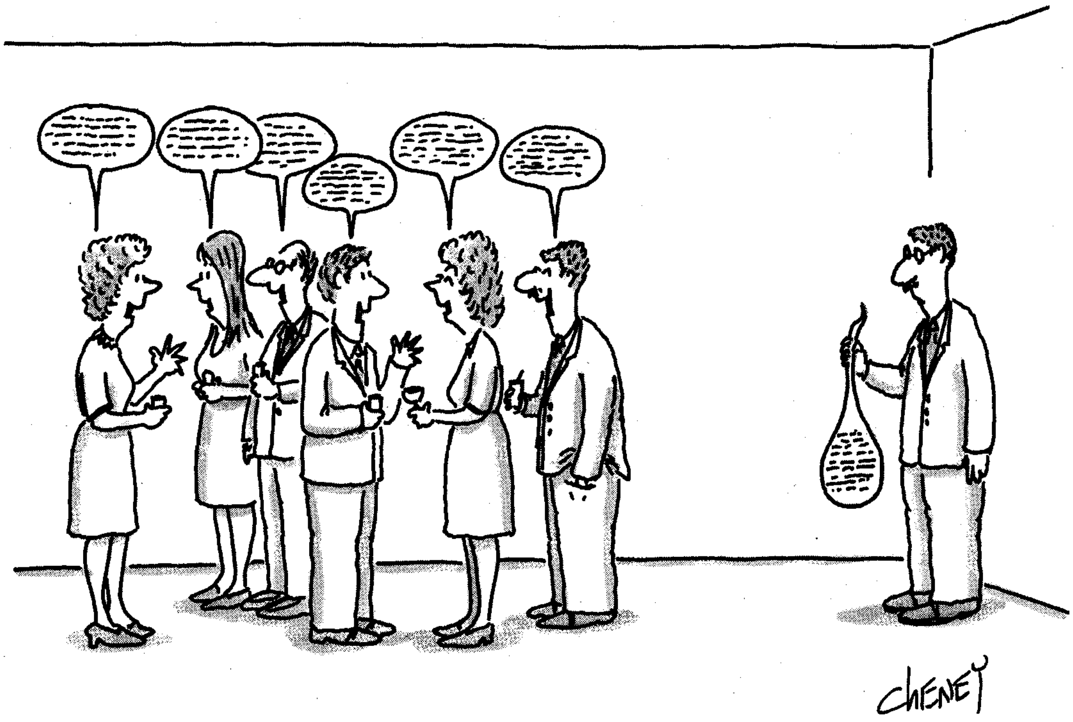

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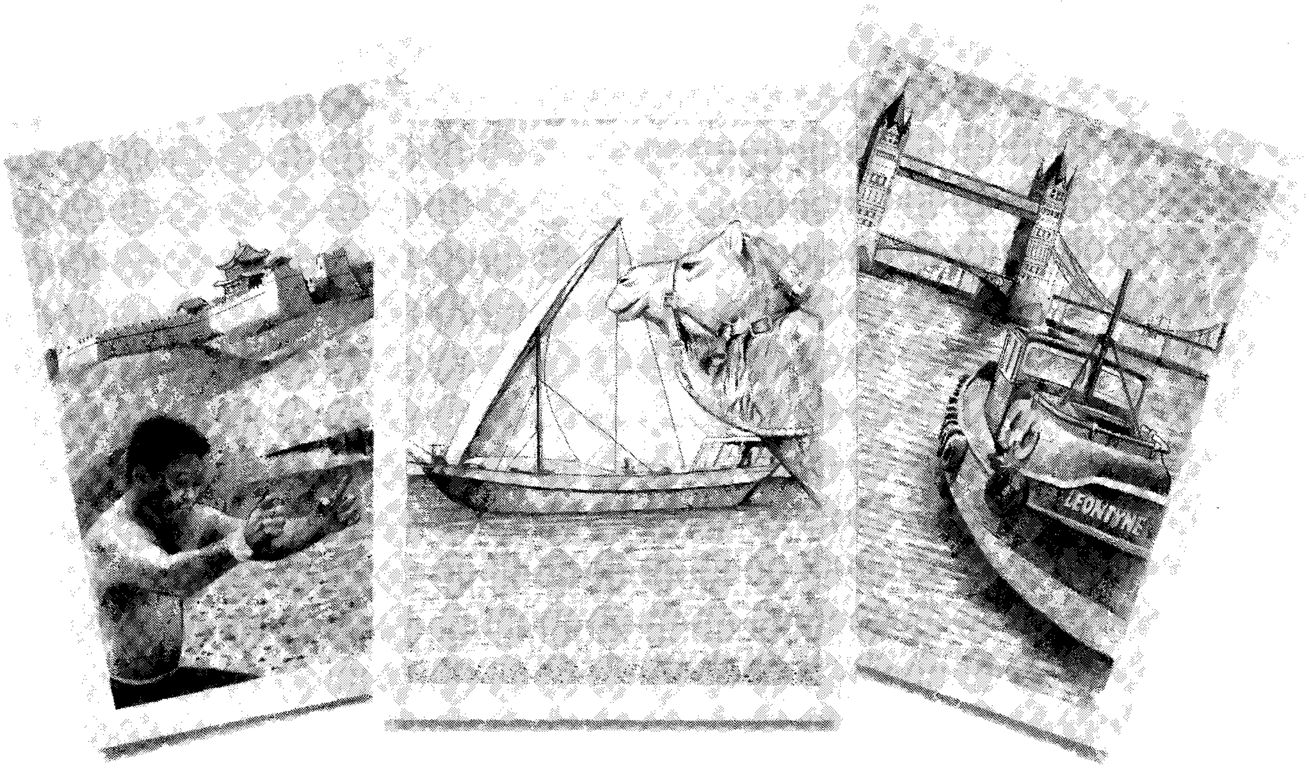
in Mandalay only this March when I was able to track down an American graduate student who had been in Burma to study Buddhism on a visa that lasted until last October. From June of 1988 through October, he lived in a monastery in Mandalay; fluent in Burmese, he had participated in the demonstrations. On the condition that I not use his name, since he wants to return to Burma, he agreed to meet with me and tell his story.

Well before Maung Maung took over the government, on August 19th, he said, the demonstrators had seized control of Mandalay, and the city had been largely able to escape the Army killings that swept Rangoon during the period Sein Lwin was in charge. "Before August 8th, the vast majority of the protesters were students and monks," he said. "But on August 8th a general strike was declared. It's the custom in Burma for poor people to be cared for to a far greater extent than in other impoverished countries, and people out of work often wind up in monasteries doing odd jobs for room and board. The monks spread the word that people who joined the general strike would be taken care of if they lost their jobs. People poured out into the streets; a few were killed. The next day, hundreds of thousands marched, offices were closed, and that was it. The Army withdrew to the walled fort in the center of the city, and the police to their barracks. There was a tacit agreement with the monks that if the demonstrators left those places alone the Army wouldn't interfere with the protesters. It was the monks who kept order—particularly the Red Eagle Brigade. This was named after the abbot who headed it; 'Red Eagle' is the English translation of his name. They were the local militia; they pirated government vans and trucks, and they armed themselves with staves and samurai swords. A cottage industry making these swords sprang up overnight. If there was a problem, armed monks would come up in a van. People feared the monks, especially the Red Eagles. Also, every neighborhood formed a local strike unit and a local defense unit, and set up barricades. I had friends who lived on the other side of town. We'd talk politics, and then on the way home I'd be stopped at every barricade, and I'd always get into a conversation, so it took hours to go home.

"The pagodas, the monasteries, and the universities were used as meeting places of the de-facto government. Forty newspapers sprang up. They ran pictures of government informers, and said that if you saw any you should report them to the information booths. These were kiosks manned by students, doctors—whosever turn it was. Since rumors were sweeping the city, the idea was to have places to go where the facts could be learned. Local news was posted at them, like the places and times of speeches. Meanwhile, the Red Eagles made all the merchants agree not to raise their prices. Prices of goods from China actually dropped precipitously, because there were no soldiers on the route to collect their payoffs. The price of bicycles dropped by half. Everyone was participating—providing food for the poor, collecting money for medicine for the wounded. No one went hungry. Every day, there were demonstrations. One day, six hundred thousand people marched—more than the population of the city. I've never seen anything like it. Support was almost one hundred per cent.

"In Rangoon, people were desperate. The prisoners had been released; goons were running around. People were going crazy, so they'd catch suspects and maul or behead them. But in Mandalay the prison was in the walled fort surrounded by a moat, so you could catch the prisoners as they came across the bridge. As soon as prisoners were released, the monks would apprehend them and take them to pagodas. They were fed, clothed, given necessary medical care, and then turned over to the local neighborhood groups to be watched."

WHILE Mandalay was being governed by monks and Rangoon was falling into chaos, the soldiers, except for some well-publicized defections, remained in their compounds, under the control of Ne Win. The Army and the government leadership were effectively holding out against the entire populace. Why didn't the armed forces crumble? The answer is that, in effect, Ne Win was reaping the rewards of having established the military, from the lowliest soldier on up, as a separate, privileged class. The military had its own schools; its own hospitals, with unlimited medical supplies; special stores, stocking goods unavailable elsewhere;



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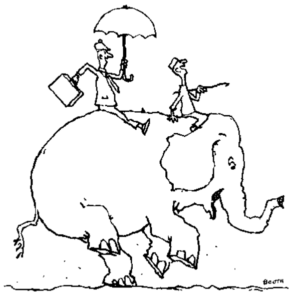

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and even its own golf courses. For the foot soldier, an Army career represented security in a country where not even a university graduate could get a job unless his parents had ties to the military or the government. For the officer, there was the opportunity to retire to a high position in a government-owned industry. In Rangoon, the son of an Army captain told me, "There's free housing on a military base. If you're sick, you go to a military hospital—and that applies to all your relatives. There are big rations of food, and special items like Nestlé condensed milk instead of the local condensed milk, which smells like garbage. The sons and daughters of an Army officer can get good jobs in Burma, or they can go abroad to work in embassies."

Therefore, when September 18th came—the eighteenth day of the ninth month—the Army was ready to move. At four in the afternoon, the Burmese radio stations ominously started broadcasting martial music. A rapid series of announcements followed: The government of Burma was dissolved and replaced by a nineteen-member military council, the State Law and Order Restoration Council. The Council ordered striking workers back to their jobs, outlawed demonstrations, imposed a nighttime curfew, and banned gatherings of more than four people. Many American newspapers the next day called the action a military coup, but the description was hardly accurate, for the military was taking over from a government that it already ran. What had really happened was that the military had stripped the civilian façade from the government. The Cabinet, the parliament, and other government ruling bodies, right down to the township level, were abolished, and military officers began exercising direct control. At the top stood yet another close associate of Ne Win, General Saw Maung, who had been the Defense Minister for the past two months and the Army Chief of Staff since 1985. In addition to his military titles, Saw Maung now held those of Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

On Monday the nineteenth, the bloodbath started. In the early-morning hours, before any demonstrators appeared, soldiers took up positions on the roof of the building across from the American Embassy. Student demonstrators started gathering around 9 A.M., and soon three thousand protesters filled the street in front of the Embassy. At about 10:30 A.M., the troops on the roof opened fire on the crowds. The front hallway of the Embassy filled with frightened students; Ambassador Levin immediately gave orders to let them past the guard booth and into the Embassy proper. Other demonstrators weren't so lucky. Although most of the Embassy's employees were huddled in inner hallways, one diplomat remained at a window, gazing in horror at students who lay on the street covered with blood; he later took me to that window and described the entire scene. At least two people were killed directly in front of the building, and many were wounded. Those who tried to escape were pursued. "It was an ambush, nothing but an ambush," the diplomat told me. "There was no attempt to scatter crowds other than by shooting to kill. And once they ran, the Army followed them. As the soldiers chased students, they fired at random into nearby buildings. They killed the son of one of our drivers that way—he was lying in bed."

In some instances, soldiers wouldn't let Red Cross workers come to the aid of people who had been shot; on at least one occasion, a Red Cross employee was shot attempting to do so. Bodies were thrown into military trucks and taken off for disposal. In Bangkok, Thant Myint-U spoke to a man who had been present when the trucks arrived at Kyandaw Cemetery, in a residential area of Rangoon about a mile and a half south of Inya Lake. The man reported hearing screaming and shots as live students were cremated along with the dead ones. "Such reports are solid enough to believe," Thant Myint-U told me. According to the State Department, possibly a thousand people were killed in Rangoon alone over a three-day period.

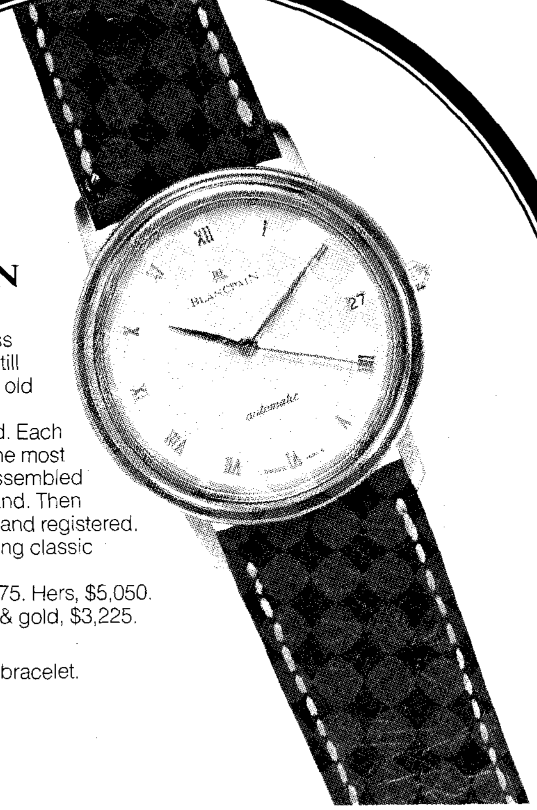
In Mandalay, the Army was more disciplined, inflicting far fewer casualties as soldiers tore down barricades and moved through the city slowly over four days. But brutality was still evident. "They started grabbing people, particularly monks," I was told by the American student who was an eyewitness during the entire period. "They humiliated the monks by kicking them and making them take down barricades. They marched into monasteries and pagodas with their boots on, carrying weapons. The abbot of one monastery confronted the soldiers at the entrance and told them, 'If you want to come into my monastery, you have to shoot me first.' Finally, he reached an agreement with them: they could enter if they took their boots off and left their weapons outside. By that time, the student demonstrators inside had been spirited out."

How could soldiers in a deeply religious country, where monks are so greatly revered, desecrate monasteries?

"The soldiers are recruited as teenagers," the student explained. "The Army is isolated from the rest of society. The soldiers were told that these monks were Communists, and therefore not monks at all."

Two other circumstances helped explain the brutality. First, the soldiers, I learned in Rangoon, had been given alcohol before they moved in. "We saw officers order their troops to drink alcohol, early in the morning and again at night," one student told me. "The alcohol was very strong, what you call in the United States moonshine. The soldiers had red eyes; they did anything they were ordered. They couldn't decide in their own minds what was right or wrong." Second, the Burmese Army didn't have tear gas in its arsenal; its recent method of crowd control has been to go in shooting.

To what extent were the events of August and September planned by Ne Win? Probably what happened during this time represented more than blundering by a rudderless government. The constant presence of the secret police while the government had supposedly dissolved into chaos suggests as much. So does the nature of the approach to the students: first the brutal Sein Lwin, then the conciliatory Maung Maung. But the conciliation was illusory: Maung Maung's election proposals never had the remotest chance of acceptance without an interim government in place. Meanwhile, the release of prisoners—not to mention incidents of poisoning of the demonstrators' water supply—was clearly meant to be disruptive, and to provide a pretext for Army intervention. And when the Army did move in on September 19th the action was far from spontaneous. Machine guns were already in position on the roofs, and after the shootings trucks came out to collect the bodies and fire engines hosed down the streets. Military officers al-



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most immediately took over from civilians in both business and government.

Why, if the whole thing had been planned, didn't the military intervene immediately instead of withdrawing and allowing several weeks of turmoil to pass? I posed that question to Yuzana Khin.

"Everyone knew that Maung Maung was a Ne Win associate," she said. "No one believed in him from the start. We sensed that the Army was playing for time during the Maung Maung period. They played these games because they wanted to know the strengths of the students, who they were, what the threats to the government were, before they moved in."

On the other hand, some see evidence that two events in the days just before the military crackdown were what provoked it. Students had laid siege to the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Trade, raising grave fears in the Army that it, too, might be vulnerable. At the Ministry of Defense, students were actively urging soldiers to come over to their side, and some of the soldiers were listening. At the Ministry of Trade, soldiers on the roof opened fire and killed one demonstrator. The troops guarding the building ended up surrendering to the protesters. According to this theory, these incidents increased the paranoia of the Army and prompted it to act. "A lot of the military really believed that the Communists were going to take over," one diplomat notes.

Whatever the explanation for the withdrawal of the Army in August, followed by the massacre in mid-September, Ne Win was clearly the one who had made the major decisions. Any doubt that he was continuing his role during his "retirement" disappeared on March 27th of this year—that day divisible by nine, which was also Burma's Armed Forces Day—when he attended a dinner for foreign envoys; it was the first time he had appeared in public since his resignation as head of the Burma Socialist Program Party the previous July. On March 28th, the *Working People's Daily* devoted its lead article to the dinner, listing all the guests, but it never mentioned Ne Win. Then someone must have sent word that Ne Win was once again to be treated as a public figure: the March 29th issue carried a huge front-page picture of him sitting at a banquet table and laughing. And a week later came the banner headline "PATRON OF THE WAR VETERANS ORGANIZATION GENERAL NE WIN (RETIRED) VIEWS THE 44TH ANNIVERSARY ARMED FORCES DAY EXHIBITION." Another big photograph showed Ne Win smiling broadly and looking fit. While I was in Burma, I read through nine months of the *Working People's Daily*, and this was the only time the paper devoted its entire front page to one subject.

EARLY one morning in Rangoon, three students came to my hotel. The day was hot and humid, but they were shivering with fear, and although we sat in the dining room, they had no interest in eating breakfast or in being interviewed; they kept looking over their shoulders, as if they expected to be snatched away at any moment. They had taken this risk because they wanted to suggest that I speak with Aung San Suu Kyi. When I told them that I would be attending a press conference she had scheduled the next day, and had already arranged to interview her afterward, they looked relieved and quickly left. "Aung San Suu Kyi is our only leader," said the student who spoke English best. "She's the only one left. There is no one else."

Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of the assassinated hero of independence Aung San, arrived in Burma from England in April of 1988, with her husband and their two sons, to visit her mother, who had suffered a stroke. (Her given name is Suu Kyi, pronounced "sue chee"; she added her father's name.) She was an infant when her father died, and has spent most of her forty-four years outside Burma. She holds a degree from Oxford and is married to Michael Aris, a scholar at Oxford who is a well-known expert on Tibet. At the time she came to Burma, she was working on a doctorate in Burmese nationalist literature and writing a biography of her father.

Upon her arrival in Rangoon, Aung San Suu Kyi was swept into the turmoil of events. The opposition was desperately searching for a leader, and she alone had been untainted by any previous connection to Ne Win. Like Benazir Bhutto and Corazón Aquino before her, she made a magnificent symbol: the daughter of Burma's great assassinated hero, come back to lead a pro-democracy movement that was trying to wrest her country from the clutches of a dictator. But she was more than a symbol; a student of politics and economics, articulate, a brilliant speaker in both Burmese and English, she immediately became a persuasive leader in her own right. Her husband and two sons eventually returned to Europe, while she stayed on to lead what has proved a lonely and dangerous fight.

Amid all its brutality, the military government of General Saw Maung that took over in mid-September insisted that it would eventually hold elections. It had to talk about elections, at least, if there was to be any chance of its getting foreign aid restored. The three big donors—Japan, with two hundred and seventy-eight million dollars in annual grants and loans; West Germany, with eighty million; and the United States, with fourteen million—had cut off their aid, and the government's foreign-exchange reserves were perilously close to zero. Almost immediately, the Saw Maung government allowed political parties to register, but it set no timetable for elections. By the time registration closed, at the end of February, two hundred and thirty-three political parties had signed up. Many of these were little more than groups of friends who, once they had registered as a party, could legally meet to discuss politics without fear of being arrested or shot. Two parties stood out as the powerful ones: the National Unity Party, which was the government's (before September, it had been called the Burma Socialist Program Party), and the National League for Democracy, which was Aung San Suu Kyi's.

Originally, the National League for Democracy had three leaders: Suu Kyi; U Tin Oo, a former Defense Minister (he is not related to the ex-intelligence chief of that name, who is now in jail); and U Aung Gyi. U Tin Oo, dismissed by Ne Win in 1976 and jailed for four years, represented what could have been an important tie between the Army and any new government. Aung Gyi, who was then seventy, has proved to be the mystery man in Burmese politics. An associate of Ne Win's in the Army, he resigned after Ne Win had seized power and begun steering the country toward a socialist path. He was jailed for three years, starting in 1965, and again, briefly, in July of last year; in between his jail terms, he ran a popular chain of Rangoon tea shops. Aung Gyi has nearly always been a critic of Ne Win; in June of 1988, he wrote a forty-one-page open letter to Ne Win, criticizing Ne Win's economic policies. Yet in an interview last October with the magazine *Asiaweek*, he said of Ne Win, "I have been associated with Ne Win for the last forty years, and we are very close to each other. . . he is like my godfather." His affection for the man who twice threw him in jail naturally makes him suspect in the eyes of students, and their suspicions were strengthened when, this January, he broke with the League and accused Suu Kyi and Tin Oo of being associated with "Communists"—a charge that was quickly picked up by government officials. (They said that they weren't making the allegation, merely repeating it.) In short, there is some merit to the view that Aung Gyi might have been planted by Ne Win to discredit the opposition.

This March, the government issued a draft election law that set up rules for running for parliament. Although military officials left themselves plenty of escape hatches, their published timetable had the election taking place by May of 1990. But even before a wave of arrests wiped out Suu Kyi's opposition effort this July, the campaign had been held on a dramatically uneven playing field. The opposition got no access to state-controlled newspapers, radio, or television. The notorious government order known as 2/88 (the second order issued by the military government installed in September of 1988), which prohibits gatherings of more than four people, technically outlawed all outdoor political activity. (The three numbers add up to eighteen, divisible by nine.) And Aung San Suu Kyi's campaigns in the countryside had encountered every sort of government harassment: loudspeakers warned people not to come into the street to see her; the authorities banned displays of campaign signs; soldiers distributed crudely drawn cartoons alleging that she and her husband engage in "foreign" sexual practices; and on April 5th she came close to being murdered by an Army captain.

That threat to her life was very much on reporters' minds as we gathered on April 19th for her press conference, held in a thatch-roofed outbuilding with a dirt floor on the grounds of her family compound, in northern Rangoon. April is the hottest month of the year in Burma, and under the midday sun the room was sweltering. But Suu Kyi—an impressively handsome woman, wearing a purple longyi and a matching long-sleeved silk blouse—looked cool and composed. Self-assured and witty, she handled the press conference with such skill that many of the reporters burst into applause at its conclusion. Her responses to questions tended to be both dramatic and highly quotable. For example, when she was asked about government harassment of her campaign, she noted that "on some

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occasions people were prevented from greeting me, even told they shouldn't *smile at me.*" She paused, looked up at the reporters, smiled broadly, and added, "This should be one of the last human rights of the Burmese people."

Suu Kyi seemed to realize that there was only a slim chance that the election would take place, and to be taking care not to imperil that chance by appearing to pose a threat to the Army. As she had already done a number of times, she went out of her way to be propitiatory. "One of the tragedies of this country is that there is a big brick wall between the Army and civilians, and neither understands the other," she said. "The main obstacle to achieving democracy is the lack of coöperation between the authorities and the political parties. The constant clashes could have been avoided if there had been coöperation. The forces of democracy are not out to destroy the Army. We're not interested in splitting the Army; we know very well that a split would pose even more problems for our country. If they refuse a dialogue, we'll just keep calling for one, because it's the right thing to do." She did comment with some cynicism on the soldiers who followed her around Rangoon, supposedly for her protection. "I fail to understand why they need clubs wrapped with barbed wire for my protection," she said. And she also said, "So many of our party members have been arrested; so many more expect to be arrested. What I say to the authorities is this: It might hurt to have people say things against you. But it doesn't hurt nearly as much as a bullet, and the people have had to face bullets."

Suu Kyi saw some negative omens for Burma. One was the reappearance of Ne Win in public at the Armed Forces Day dinner on March 27th. "There have been many who thought he was pulling the strings," she said. "I tend to agree with the people who think this. His appearance in March is not what we would call the most encouraging sign in the world." Then, there was Japan's decision to break with the foreign-aid donors' boycott and resume aid to projects that had been begun before the 1988 repression. "For a country as rich as Japan to put profits before human rights is really shocking," she remarked. "It's not that they would starve to death if they placed human rights before economic considerations."

Speaking almost casually, as if her courage were no big deal, Suu Kyi talked about what had happened at Danubyu, a town in the Irrawaddy delta, on April 5th. As she was walking down the street with some followers during a campaign visit, six soldiers under the command of an Army captain jumped down from a jeep, assumed a kneeling position, and took aim at her. She motioned to her followers to wait on the sidewalk, and she herself walked down the center of the road toward the soldiers. "It seemed so much simpler to provide them with a single target than to bring everyone else in," she told us. "It was at this point that a major ordered the captain to revoke the shooting orders."

After the press conference, I walked with Suu Kyi to her house, a rambling old structure without air-conditioning, comfortable but clearly in a state of disrepair. We took off our shoes at the front door and went into the living room to talk. Her responses to questions were short and direct, just as they had been at the press conference, and she revealed nothing of the anxiety that must have been haunting her, away from her family and facing a military government that more than once seemed on the verge of murdering her. "The campaign has made me rather thin and weather-beaten," she said. "It's quite exhausting tramping around the countryside. It's not excitement—it's grinding hard work. I don't have time to think about a previous life."

Suu Kyi quickly dismissed the notion that she deserved credit for her courage at Danubyu. "It's not bravery," she declared. "It's a question of doing what you have to do. You can go ahead with what you're doing or you can run away." Her boasting was reserved for the students who were working so hard to build her campaign organization around the country; talking about them brought the only display of emotion she allowed to cross her face. "These young people were very brave," she told me. "They said everything that people had wanted to say for twenty-six years but had been afraid to. There are no professional politicians in our party; we learn on the job, as it were. We've grown far too quickly; our membership is two or three million after just a few months. Because of that, we're not doing as well in organization or discipline as we want to. But now the students have a framework in which to work. By working with older people, they've matured so much more quickly. They were teen-agers in August; they're young men and women today."

THE opposition politicians and the dissident students proved far easier to find than leaders of the Burmese government. The government, having invited eight reporters into the country for the week of April 17th, the first major test of the open-door policy for the press proclaimed in January, apparently had no idea what to do with us. We determined later that military intelligence had been attempting to learn whom we spoke with, but that was all. No one met us at the airport, no one dropped off propaganda packages at our hotels, no one got in touch with us to suggest people we might interview. I tried phoning U Kyaw Sann, who held the title of military spokesman, but his line was always busy. Finally, I set out, with a Burmese interpreter—not my friend U Myint Thame, since I didn't want to take him into a military building—to find him. We went to the area of Rangoon where the Defense Ministry buildings are clustered, and started asking for him. At each building, we were greeted by soldiers who pointed rifles with bayonets at us and, when we had posed our questions, gave us directions to another building. At last, we found the right place, but the soldiers wouldn't let us in; they told us that the building was closed for lunch. It was 10:40 A.M.

That afternoon, thinking that I might have to leave Burma without so much as laying eyes on someone in the government, I started calling a list of government phone numbers I had been given. Telephones aren't easy to use in Burma: a call from my hotel to a hotel a mile away would generally take half an hour and result in a connection so poor I had to shout every word. But eventually a person answered at the Foreign Ministry, and I asked to talk to someone who spoke fluent English. A man came on the line speaking perfect, British-accented English. As soon as I told him my name, he said, "Ah, yes. From San Francisco."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"We know more about you than you think," he replied.

"If that's the case, then you know how frustrated I am at not being able to talk to anyone in the government," I said.

He asked me to hold the line, and within thirty seconds he was back with the news that I could interview the head of the Foreign Ministry the next afternoon.

U Ohn Gyaw is the director-general of the Foreign Ministry; he's not called Foreign Minister, because that is one of the titles that Saw Maung appropriated when he became head of state. Wearing a purple longyi, a white Nehru jacket, and sandals with no socks, Ohn Gyaw took a seat in a room furnished entirely with overstuffed chairs and couches upholstered in yellow cloth. With heavy brown-rimmed glasses, a loud and forceful voice, and hands constantly moving to punctuate his remarks, he makes a powerful impression. His words sounded oddly anachronistic in 1989 as he made it clear that to his mind the nationwide demonstrations were part of a Communist conspiracy. "Rangoon is a city with many satellite towns," he told me in speaking of what happened in August and September of 1988. "Activists of the Burma Communist Party were present on the outskirts. Why were there so many people on the streets of the city? The people on the outskirts came in waves, some by coercion. They were coerced by a group the government analyzed as cells of the B.C.P. The busloads of people coming in, the slogans, the way of organizing—it was quite obvious there was someone behind this." He added, "The B.C.P. is not like the Russian or Chinese Communists. Its members are very much dogmatists, resorting to extreme actions, believing that nothing can come without revolution." In reality, according to all analyses outside the Burmese government, the B.C.P. lost the backing of Beijing years ago, and now exists almost exclusively as an opium-smuggling operation.

While Ohn Gyaw's theory about a Communist conspiracy was not to be taken seriously, his answer to my question about Aung San Suu Kyi and the incident in Danubyu struck me as chilling.

"Even assuming she was violating the government's order against outdoor campaigning, aren't there other ways to deal with that besides shooting her?" I asked. "Couldn't you negotiate

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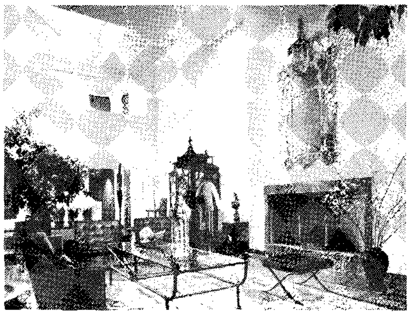

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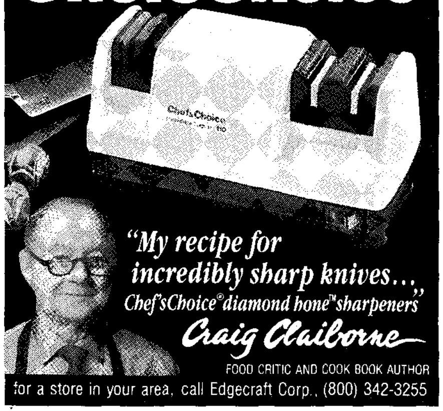

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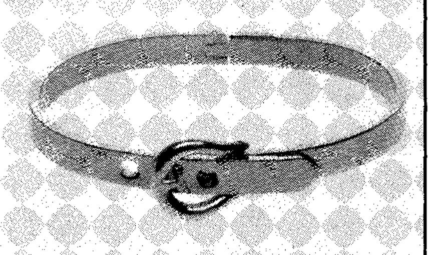

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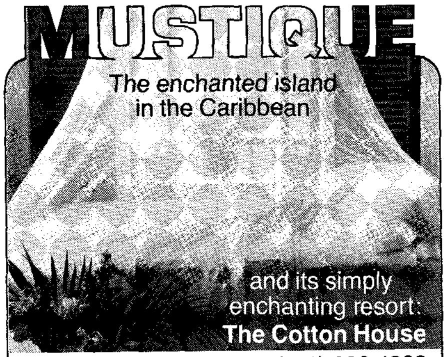

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with her, use tear gas, arrest her, or do something short of killing her?"

Ohn Gyaw was unmoved. "The captain was asking the group not to hold the flag in front of the march," he replied. "The point is that demonstrations are not allowed. This was a demonstration: holding the flag and shouting slogans. The captain designated a lamppost and said, 'If you pass this, we'll be compelled to shoot.' At that moment, the major came. This is a land of law and order. Be it Aung San Suu Kyi or a passerby, if people didn't listen to the authorities, what would happen? This is not the West. Here they can express themselves inside some hall."

Ohn Gyaw confidently predicted that the elections would indeed take place no later than next May. "The responsibility of the armed forces is to hold the elections," he said. "Beyond that, they will go back to the barracks. We will hand over power when the next government is formed."

I said I wondered how there could be elections if a candidate gets shot for campaigning outdoors.

He answered that campaigning would be allowed for three months preceding the election. "If law and order are threatened, of course, any drastic ban could be enforced," he said. He also said that I wouldn't be able to interview General Saw Maung—he was much too busy—or Ne Win or Maung Maung, since both were retired. "The retired people are retired," he stated. "We let them have their own time."

Later in the week, however, the government did grant a request by the American reporters visiting Rangoon to interview the Information Committee of the State Law and Order Restoration Council. That committee is made up of four high-ranking military officers and three civilians who run the Burmese media and disseminate official propaganda. We were seated at a long table, with waiters serving finger sandwiches, eggrolls, and tea. There were microphones, tape recorders, and photographers. It had all the earmarks of a government-sponsored propaganda extravaganza, the full text of which would appear in an issue of the *Working People's Daily*. That newspaper has the habit of printing critical questions from press conferences, or critical comments from Western publications or the Voice of America, and then telling the "truth" about the subject by giving the official government position. No Burmese, of course, believe the answers, but they avidly read the criticisms—criticisms that would get people executed if they appeared on a political poster.

But not a word of our press conference ever appeared in print. In retrospect, I wasn't surprised. The Information Committee was used to giving commands to the Burmese media, not to being questioned by Western reporters. And some of our questions were so unsettling that we threw its members into an uproar. On several occasions, they seemed to forget about us and argued loudly among themselves in Burmese.

One of our questions was what the Army's response would be if the government that took power after the elections started prosecuting military officers for murder.

"Everything that was done was done according to the law," a member replied.

That was actually a much more diplomatic response than Ohn Gyaw's earlier answer to the same question. "Nothing like that will happen in Burma," he had told me. "You're thinking of the West. It won't happen here."

The committee members told us they were going to clear up all our misconceptions about Burma. (They spoke as a group rather than as individuals; they would reach a consensus to answer a question, and then one of them would deliver the answer in English while the others nodded in agreement.) "Certain foreign journalists do not write things in our favor," they said. "Now we are giving you the right news."

What was the right news?

"Ne Win does not have any control whatsoever." The Army is loved by the people, particularly in rural areas. "In Burma, eighty per cent live in villages. You have to go to a village to hear what people say." Although the law forbids outdoor gatherings of more than four people, you can have a wedding or a funeral and not get shot (presumably an indication of the government's flexibility). Stability must come before democracy, or "this could be a little Lebanon." Finally, don't underestimate the Communist threat: "We think we know more about our Burmese Communists than you do."

The interviews with Ohn Gyaw and the Information Committee left serious doubts about Burma's future. The responses in each case allowed no room for compromise, and their views about students and Communists seemed to bear no relation to reality. Can such people allow free elections and willingly turn the government over to civilians? In July, the Burmese authorities answered that question. July 19th is Martyrs' Day, the anniversary of the day Aung San was assassinated, and Suu Kyi planned to lead a rally. The day before, the government issued an edict allowing military officers, even those of junior rank, to arrest political protesters and administer one of three sentences on the spot: three years at hard labor, life imprisonment, or execution. Thousands of troops flooded into Rangoon, setting up barricades and broadcasting warnings against demonstrations from trucks with loudspeakers. Fearing a bloodbath, Suu Kyi called off the rally. On July 20th (the sum of the digits 7/20 can be divided by nine), the troops surrounded her compound, putting Suu Kyi and former Defense Minister Tin Oo, the other leader of her party, under house arrest. Then came a wave of arrests of Suu Kyi's supporters, including, as I learned in late August, the students who had come to my hotel that morning in April and also Dr. Tin Myo Win, the surgeon at Rangoon General Hospital whom I had interviewed. The arrests numbered in the thousands, virtually eliminating the leadership of Suu Kyi's campaign organization. "The Burmese government never bothered to try to justify the arrests," a diplomat told me. "They never even formally outlawed her political party, which to this day is still legal." To make space in the jails for the political prisoners, the government released more than eighteen thousand common criminals. On August 21st, Ambassador Levin cabled the State Department that "we now have credible, first-hand reports that torture, beatings, and mistreatment [of the new political prisoners] are commonplace, and that in some instances death has resulted." In mid-September, the Kachin Independence Organization, an ethnic group fighting the government from northeast Burma, reported that the Army was using several hundred of the new prisoners as porters in their fight against the Kachins, roping them together,

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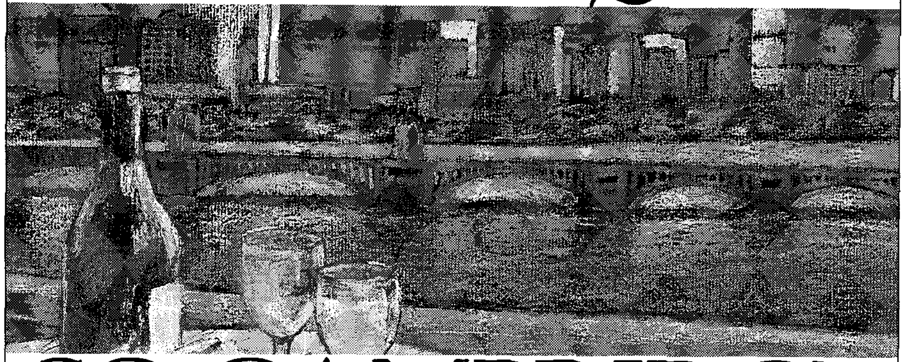

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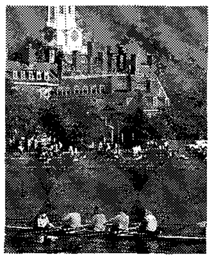

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marching them with almost nothing to eat, and beating to death those who stumbled or fell. By September 20th, there were reports that an average of twenty people a night were being hauled away in Rangoon, some jailed and others executed. The arbitrary nature of the arrests was setting off a mass exodus of young Burmese toward the Thai border, and Thai authorities were threatening to deliver them back into the hands of the Burmese Army.

Why did the Burmese government so brutally sabotage its own move to restore respectability through elections? The most likely explanation is that the dictatorship had originally envisioned a Guatemalan-type solution for Burma—with the military pulling the strings behind the scenes, and a powerless civilian government creating a façade that would allow the resumption of foreign aid and investment. But Suu Kyi wasn't following the script; she was turning into a national hero with broad-based support that threatened the military leadership. This summer, her political rallies were routinely drawing between ten thousand and fifteen thousand people, and for the first time she had begun to criticize Ne Win by name, urging the Army to support the Burmese people instead of the entrenched dictatorship. There were indications that at least some of the troops were listening; the government kept rotating the soldiers who were posted at Suu Kyi's rallies.

With all the top political opposition in jail, it's now the Army that holds Burma's future in its hands. In August, I was given the opportunity to submit questions through an intermediary to a high-ranking Army officer who now opposes the government. "There is a great deal of discontent within the Army," he said. "For the soldiers and their officers fighting the ethnic minorities, conditions are very difficult, and this is where the discontent begins. To enjoy real privileges, you have to be based in Rangoon or have personal connections. Many of us in the Army realize that things cannot go on like this." Will the split in the Army, or perhaps the growing discontent from soaring food prices and a deteriorating economy, bring on another uprising? That's one possibility. Continued shootings and repression as Burma falls apart is another.

—Stan Sesser

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WATER WITCHING

LATE summer a year ago: Fred C. Neumann, ninety-one, is shuffling across the living room of his Romeo, Michigan, bungalow in white sweat socks without shoes, bearing a slingshot-shaped apple branch on his upraised palms, like an offering to the gods. "Grab ahold here!" he calls out to me, with a bald-headed nod toward one end of the stick. "Now give me your other hand, 'cause you're just groundin' the circuit." And we're off—knocking together a bit until I get the hang of it—cruising around the brown shag rug.

Suddenly, the stick begins to dance. "That's nothing but the surface water," Neumann says. "Wait till we come to a vein." And, sure enough, right between a Stratolounger and a floor lamp the stick lurches upward and nearly breaks loose. Neumann turns, peers over his bifocals, and points to a place on the carpet. "That's the spot," he says. "There's a good flow, fifty-four foot down."

Neumann has been locating water with forked sticks and telling people where to dig their wells since he was a boy growing up here, in farm country forty miles north of Detroit. His method is the centuries-old art called, variously, dowsing, water witching, and divining, but to Neumann the job is simply "figurin' it out." No flashing eyes and floating hair. No cryptic mumblings. "It's routine, you understand," says Neumann, a gaunt and clear-eyed pragmatist who found out long ago that when the stick starts to flop there's water.

Yellowed newspaper clippings that have been stuffed into a coffee-table drawer by his wife, Marie, attest that in his heyday Neumann found water all over Michigan. He rattles off a list of patrons, which includes a Fisher Body plant (now Inland Fisher Guide) in Howell, Michigan; the International Pipe & Ceramic Company, in Bruce Township; and the Romeo school district. But although these and other "finds" are chronicled in Marie's collection of clippings, Neumann waves off requests for specific names and sites. "You know, all those big shots," he says.

He does recall a day about fifty years ago when Edward F. Fisher, the Detroit auto-body pioneer, sent his chauffeur over to Neumann's house in Romeo. Fisher wanted the dowser, who then had a job as a pipe fitter at the Ford Motor Company, to locate water on the construction site of his future home, a million-dollar house in a rural suburb of Detroit. The house was partly built, the yard pockmarked with dry holes. "They had all those big shots walkin' around the hill," Neumann says. "I said send 'em home. They had a bunch of books so big." Neumann plants one hand on a waist-high stack of invisible tomes. "I said put 'em away." The trouble with geologists, or "those scientific types," is, according to Neumann, "They know what's in the book, but that's all they know." As for Fisher's well, "I figured that one out right away," Neumann says. He recalls how the stick heaved over directly above the half-built porch, and how the owner tore the house down and had it relocated a couple of hundred feet away to accommodate the well. "Said he guessed the house would look just as good over there."

"Then there's all those Japanese," Marie Neumann chimes in, glancing up from a crossword puzzle.

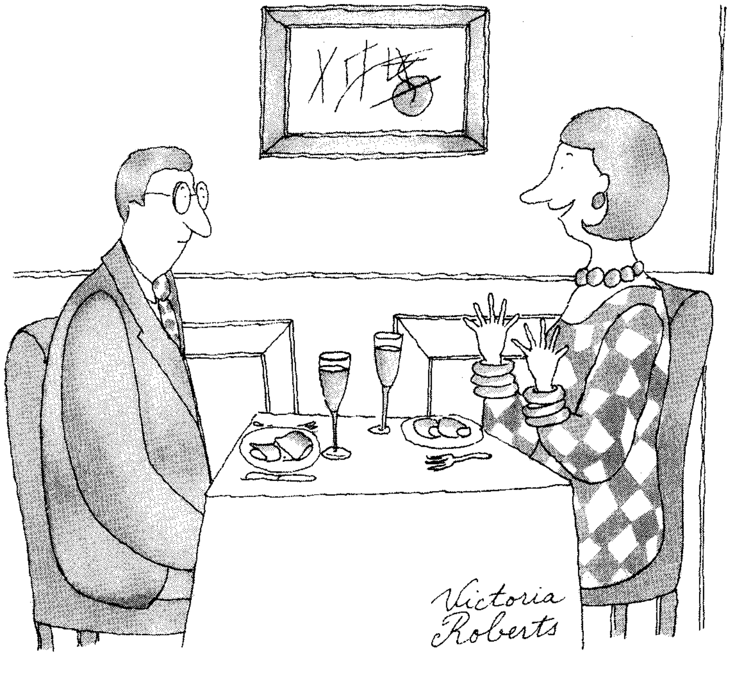
Her husband nods but sternly resists elaborating. "They call me. I do the job."

If the sight of Neumann careering around a field, driving his stick like a phantom plow, amuses bystanders, he doesn't mind. His customers over the years have been practical people who have cared only that his work pays off. "Never had a complaint," Neumann says. "Ever hear of one, Marie?"

"Nope," his wife says, with an admiring glance at her husband and a pat to her firm gray coiffure. "Just yesterday, we got a call from a man who'd spent three thousand dollars looking for water. He was so tickled. Said they hit water right where Fred told them. Come out to the inch."

"If they thought I was nuts, they wouldn't call—now, would they?" Neumann says. It's the same for Marie, he adds. What do people say when she tells them she's married to a water witch? "They say, 'Well, now, I'll keep that in mind.' " When skeptics claim that in most places it doesn't matter where you dig, that there's water everywhere, Neumann cuts through the nonsense: "Then how come all the places I go to figure out, they've got a bunch of dry holes?"

Requests for his dowsing still come in. And so on a cool September morning Neumann is heading off to a rural building site near Ann Arbor where the driller has failed to strike water. But first he will visit a nearby orchard to clip apple branches and restock a



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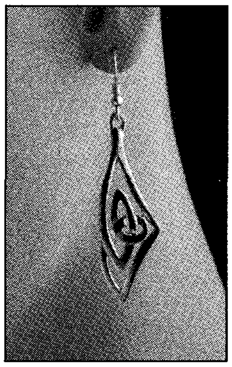

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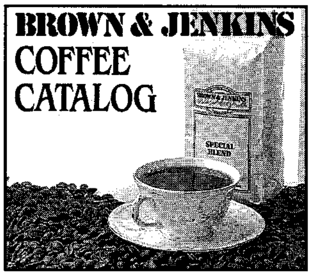

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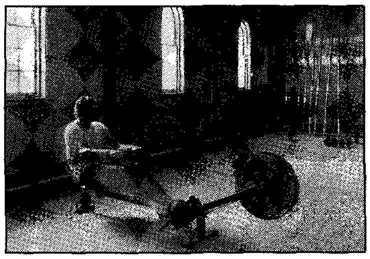

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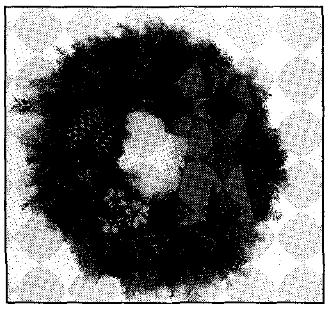

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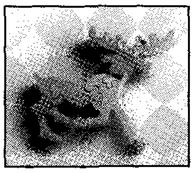

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bucket in which he keeps forked sticks soaking outside his back door. He is crustily tolerant of a novice's "schoolteacher questions," as he puts it, but he warns me that finding a stick of just the right length and with just the right forked angle can take hours. The locating job itself will probably take a few minutes.

"I'll show you how it's done," he says as he tugs on a red-and-black checked woodsman's shirt and snaps on suspenders, which stretch taut over his caved-in chest like strings on a violin. Slumped in the passenger's seat of my car, Neumann pulls on a plain blue baseball cap, then jiggles one of his sticks and begins calling out the depth of water alongside the road, his head swivelling from side to side like a periscope. "A good vein over there at fifteen feet," he muses. "There it's ninety feet down behind the barn. And across the road there's a good flow at a hundred and forty."

How can he tell how deep the water runs without walking over the spot?

"Been at it near a century," he says. "A few years back, I realized I could get a pretty good reading from the road. If I wanted to check my figures —well, now, I'd go out there and walk it."

Between his depth readings, Neumann talks about his past. "It always come natural to me, all that figurin'." He learned the dowser's art eighty years ago, he said, from his mother, Minnie, who had grown up in the German countryside. In Germany, I subsequently learned, the divining rod had been traditional since the early sixteenth century—originally among miners searching for tin, copper, and other metal ores, and only later as a water finder. It is from the literature of mining that we receive the first detailed description of dowsing—a 1556 account of German mining methods written in Latin by Georgius de Agricola, and published in London in 1912, in a translation by a young mining engineer named Herbert Hoover. Agricola describes the miners, with their forked branches, wandering "hither and thither at random through mountainous regions," but neither he nor any other early writer establishes the ritual's origins. Agricola writes only that "the unsophisticated common miners" divorced the rod from wizards' incantations and adopted it as a layman's tool.

In the fifth century B.C., Herodotus reported that the Scythians, in what is now southern Russia, detected perjurers by means of willow rods. Tacitus wrote that the Frisians, a Germanic people, employed fruit-tree branches to detect murderers, and Marco Polo observed the use of cane rods for divination in the Orient. In these early references, though, the rod appears to have operated not in the physical realm, like the German miners' rods and Fred Neumann's water-locating stick, but as an instrument of morality, detecting guilt or deciding future courses of action.

The antecedents of the divining rod as a tool for finding minerals and water beneath the earth are dim indeed. Believers cite eight-thousand-year-old cave etchings in the Atlas Mountains of northwest Africa as showing a water dowser at work, and ancient Chinese texts suggest that rods were used by water seekers more than two thousand years before Christ. The Bible contains many references to rods in connection with miracles, and in Numbers 20:9-11 Moses "smote the rock" with his rod and brought forth water. But the connection between the use of rods in the ancient world and their reëmergence among the sixteenth-century German miners is, as writers so often lament, "lost in antiquity." The dowsing rod's development since the sixteenth century is easier to trace.

German miners were imported into England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I to develop the depressed mines of Cornwall, and they brought their rods along. By the late seventeenth century, miners throughout Europe were familiar with metal divining and had begun to use their rods to search for water. Water dowsing spread quickly beyond the mining districts, and by the eighteenth century the custom had crossed the Atlantic.

The forked stick was standard equipment for Minnie Neumann, who ran the family farm in Michigan after her husband died, leaving her with fourteen children. "I learned figurin' from my mother," Neumann says. "Only learnin's not the right word. My mother showed me. Took my hand, plunked it on the stick—just like I showed you, back there at the

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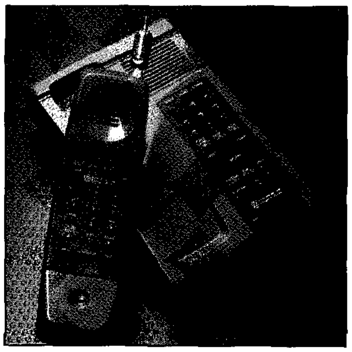

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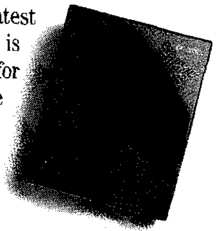

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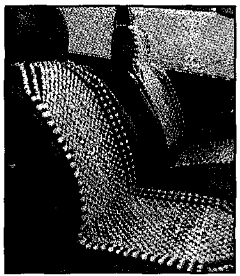

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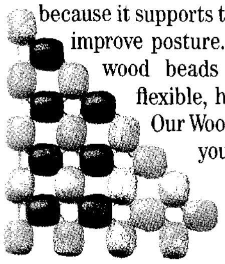

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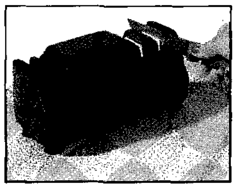

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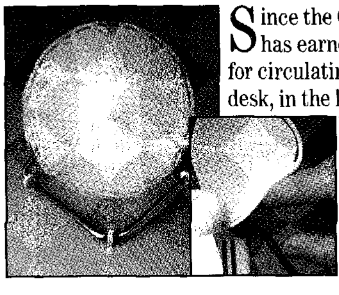

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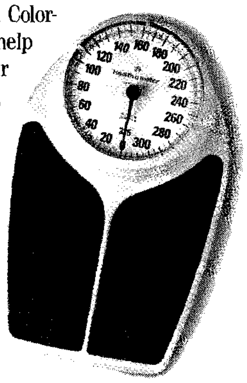

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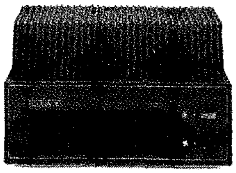

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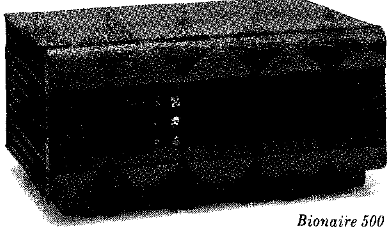

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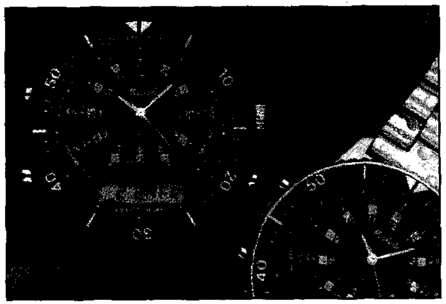

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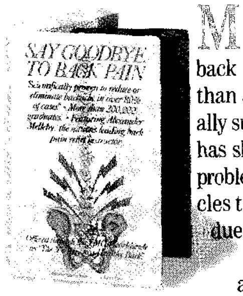

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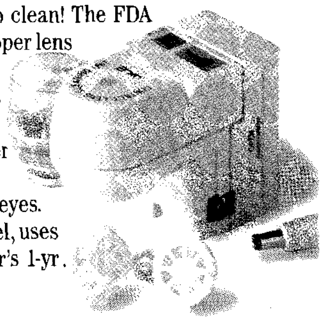

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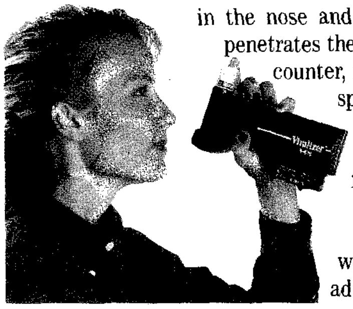

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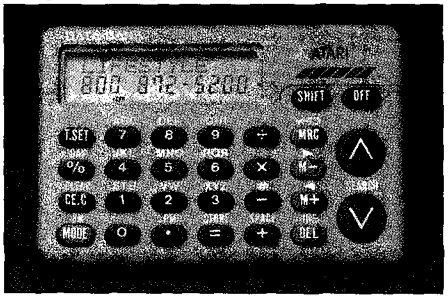

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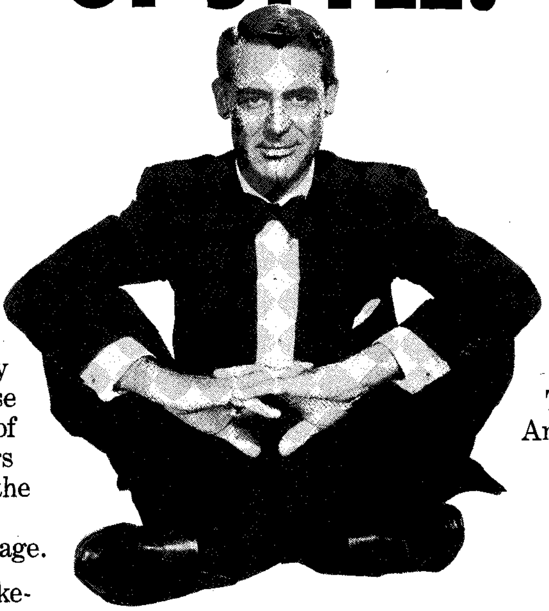

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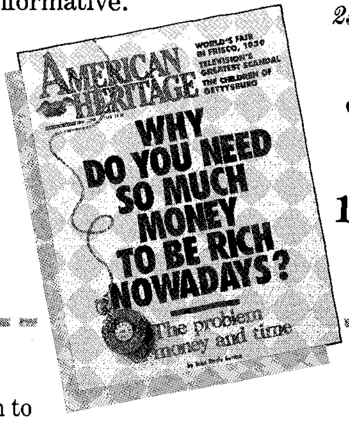
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house. Actually, it ain't no figurin', either, just a click over here." He pokes his left side.

Requests for further explanations evoke only a stare. Neumann smiles indulgently when I tell him the belief, still traditional in the Cornish countryside, that the rod is guided to water by pixies. But he has a short fuse for humbug, and cuts off an account of a French water dowser who in the days of Louis XIV achieved the equivalent of tabloid fame for discovering missing corpses and dogging their murderers around the Continent, hunched over his forked twig like Sherlock Holmes over his magnifying glass. "A lot of weirdos over there, I guess," Neumann pronounces, and he quickly turns his attention to a Victorian farmhouse we are passing: "Forty-five foot down. A good vein."

None of the thirteen other children in the family had the dowser's knack. "Oh, there was Elbert," Neumann recalls as we park in front of a produce stand at the Verellen Orchards. "Elbert could get a little tickle from the surface water, but when he come to a vein he didn't know the difference."

Neumann climbs out of the car and walks over to the apple stand, where a blond teen-age girl slouches behind a cash register. He peers at her over a mound of bushel baskets. "I'd like to go in there . . . look over the trees . . . cut some sticks." When the girl squints at him in incomprehension, he adds, "Locatin' sticks."

The two regard each other blankly over the wall of apples.

"I'll call my boss," she says.

"Right," he says. "Tell him it's Fred Neumann."

Bob Verellen, a stocky man in his seventies, wearing a checked shirt identical with Neumann's, jogs over from the orchard and knocks the breath out of the dowser with a good-old-boy slap on the back. "Fred's pretty well known around here," Verellen tells me as all three of us search for acute-angled forks among the knotted branches of his apple and peach trees. Verellen recalls how Neumann's reputation soared fifteen years back, when he bailed out the Romeo school system by locating a well for its junior high.

"Yeah," Neumann says. "They had all these smart guys from Lansing"—the state headquarters of Michigan's Geological Survey. "They'd been out there a long time digging dry holes. Place looked like the moon when I got there." He smiles at the comic-strip image: the boy geniuses of technology, stumped. According to a news clipping in Marie Neumann's coffee-table drawer, Fred's figuring saved the city a hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars, the cost of a hookup with the Detroit water system. He charged his usual fee: twenty-five dollars. "I figured that one out in a half hour," he says with a wave of dismissal.

Still rummaging through the apple trees with a jackknife, Neumann cuts dozens of Y-shaped boughs. He test-drives each one around the orchard, then rejects it as too thick or too spindly. After an hour, he has two wishbone-shaped cuttings, one peach and one apple, each of which is about twice the thickness of a pencil.

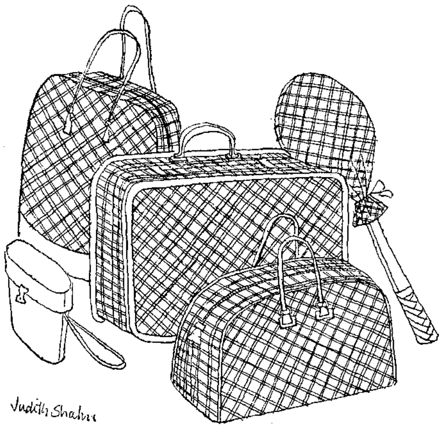
On the drive out North Territorial Road to the building site, Neumann flexes his rods happily. "Some say you gotta use a stick that's still got some life in it," he says. "They say, 'That stick's thirsty and bends down to drink.' I say that's a crock."

So why does he keep his rods soaking in a bucket back at the house?

His response comes like a rap on the knuckles with a ruler: "They've gotta bend, now, don't they?"

Neumann does insist on using fruit-tree branches for his dowsing. "Peach or apple's just as good," he says. Other dowsers swear by willow or hazelwood. The first dowsing settlers in Colonial America commonly used a witch-hazel wand, and that choice, rather than associations with the Devil, may account for the label "water witch," which is used only in the United States.

Dowsers in America quickly divested the practice of both mystery and theory and imbued it with Yankee practicality. "No voodoo about it," says Neumann. He can't see why anyone would want to shroud his low-overhead service in mystery. Yet he is just as irritated by attempts to explain his work "scientifically." "Some say there's electrical forces in the water that draw down on the stick," he says. "Can't buy that, either."



Electromagnetism as an explanation for the dowsing response has indeed been argued repeatedly, and it still has its supporters. After thirty years of research, a retired University of Missouri physicist, Zaboj V. Harvalik, is convinced that human beings can recognize slight changes in the earth's magnetic field which are caused by underground water or oil cavities. Citing scores of personal experiments and a raft of bewildering charts and graphs, Professor Harvalik traces this sensitivity to two glands above the kidneys, not so far from where Neumann thumped his side, and to the pituitary gland, at the base of the brain, or the pineal gland, which is near the back of the brain, and which mystics associate with a third eye. The instinct survives, Harvalik feels, from some loping prehuman ancestor who relied on magnetism for navigation. We all have the witching potential, in other words; it just needs a little revving up. "It's like playing the piano," Harvalik explains. "The more you practice, the better you get." Once you're attuned, your upper arm rises slightly when you walk over a magnetic anomaly caused by flowing water. The rod simply amplifies the motion.

Neumann dismisses Professor Harvalik's lifework in two words: "Another crock." He adds, "If that's so, how come I get these readings from the road?" But while he rejects any suggestion that his own movements trigger the stick's spasms, he does suspect that his dowsing ability may be a mental gift. "You ask me," he says, tapping the bill of his baseball cap, "it's up here." He quickly turns and looks out the window, made uneasy by a train of thought that threatens to plunge his art into the mists of clairvoyance. "You want water?" he says, with gruff finality. "Call Fred Neumann."

LIKE Neumann, most American water witches have steered away from explanations of their art, while their counterparts in Europe have generated a steady stream of dowsing theories. At every step in the advance of science and philosophy, a dowsing

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apologist has emerged from some cluttered laboratory abroad and tried to explain the art in terms of that latest discovery. Inspired by eighteenth-century atomic studies, the English surgeon William Pryce suggested in 1778 that "corpuscular emanation," or atomic particles of a sort, rises from subterranean water and minerals and draws down the forked twig by entering the "little interstices" of the porous wood.

Around 1800, when the study of electricity was progressing, dowsing advocates tried to explain their art as an electrical phenomenon, comparing the forked stick's spasms to those of Galvani's amputated frogs' legs, made to twitch by a jolt of electricity. Like tales of the thirsty stick, remnants of the electrical theories still crop up in the backwoods of America: when Fred Neumann hands over one end of his apple branch and grabs the free hand of an initiate, he says he is "grounding" a circuit.

When the foundations of psychology were being laid, in the mid-nineteenth century, dowsing's investigators began to link the rod's movement to mental processes. In 1891, the Irish scientist Sir William Barrett undertook an extensive study, which became a dowsing classic, "The Divining Rod." The book concludes that autosuggestion is the key. Unconsciously initiated movements in the diviner's hand turn the twig. Barrett believed that many water diviners were charlatans or self-deceivers, but he defended a few as true clairvoyants.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, advances in the study of radioactivity and electromagnetism dominated the scientific news. Impelled to explain dowsing in terms of these phenomena, the French geographer Henri Mager produced three elaborate volumes on the subject in 1912 and 1913, along with an invention of his, widely advertised as the Indicator of Current Groundwater. This was one of a series of mechanical water and oil finders that began to proliferate in the early twentieth century, especially in America.

Americans, who had taken little interest in dowsing theory, now played an active role as inventors of dowsing technology. While some of their countrymen were dreaming up the washing machine, the home refrigerator, and the submachine gun, inspired tinkerers were concocting the Clairoscope, the Flashlight Dip Needle, and the Hieronymus Machine. The last item is not a medieval torture device, as its name suggests, but a piece of American ingenuity for measuring the radiation from underground water: it consisted of prisms, coils, and electrodes, and was designed by Thomas G. Hieronymus, of Kansas City, Missouri.

An abundant crop of mechanical water finders is scattered among the five million items in the United States Patent Office files, but they are no longer to be found under "Divining Rods." They have been purged by the Patent Office as scientifically disreputable, and have been replaced by a three-line disclaimer and a referral to "Water Supply Paper 416." This paper, which was commissioned by the United States Geological Survey in 1917 and reissued in 1934 and 1957, gives a brief history of water witching, which includes twenty-eight pages of references and an exasperated note: "It is doubtful whether so much investigation and discussion have been bestowed on any other subject with such absolute lack of positive results."

Long after the United States Geological Survey delivered its verdict, back-roads Yankee pan salesmen were still hawking new and improved water-finding gadgets, bristling with wires and knobs. Meanwhile, the science of psychoanalysis had come into being abroad, and dowsing awaited its deliberations. In 1935, an Italian psychoanalyst named Emilio Servadio explained the witching performance as an unconscious desire to penetrate Mother Earth and return to the womb. Other commentators have pointed out the twig's phallic symbolism, and have drawn parallels with magic wands, sceptres, and other emblems of power from which, they said, the divining rod must have evolved. But American dowsers knew all this instinctively. A backwoods proverb *has it that* "a feller's gotta be a whole man if he aims to take up witch wigglin'."

I KNOW better than to try any more theories on Fred Neumann as we drive on through a flat landscape toward the dowsing site on North Territorial Road. Anyway, he is dozing, his cap pulled over his eyes. But he snaps to attention as we swerve into a weed-choked lot beside a collapsed barn. The car bumps across ruts that were made last week by the driller's tires and stops in a muddy clearing near the center of the field, where a four-inch-wide borehole descends a hundred and twenty feet into the ground. "Probably drilled here 'cause it was a good place to park," Neumann says as he steadies his new apple branch above the driller's hole. "Dry as a bone," he announces with satisfaction. "Couldn't brush your teeth on what's down there." With one hand shading his eyes, he nods toward the lot's northeast corner, which is lower-lying, and declares, "Water's out that way." He pitches through waist-high weeds sprinkled with purple wildflowers and pungent stands of anise until the stick lurches up and swats his chin. Eyes squinting, knuckles going white, he arm-wrestles it toward the ground, but the rod finally heaves back and points toward his heart, leaving red scrapes on his palms. "That's the place," Neumann gasps, and he holds up his blisters like stigmata. "You should see the skin peelers a fellow can get in this business." He verifies the spot from three directions, then stoops and pushes a twig into the ground to mark it. "There's two veins crossing here," he says. "Plenty of water—seventy foot down."

It may be "an eye for the country" that guides the dowser, some skeptics claim. Neumann may sense the earmarks of underground water, like prolific vegetation or low-lying areas where water might head on its downhill course. But that would not explain the mysterious process whereby Neumann "figures" how far down the water lies. This insight comes to him through what he calls "the points"—a number that alights in his brain at the moment the stick dips or as his eyes scan a landscape from the car. Neumann has been building a rock pile on his chosen spot. "We'll tell the driller to dig here," he says. "But we won't tell him how deep the vein is—these guys are paid by the foot." Some drillers will pass up the dowser's vein deliberately, he feels, and greedily go for a deeper one.

Twenty minutes after our arrival, Neumann is sacked out in the passenger's seat again, his head resting on a Stars-and-Stripes beach towel.

TWO weeks after the dowser's visit, Miles Bentley, of the Bentley Drilling Company, is clanking up to Neumann's cairn of stones in a light

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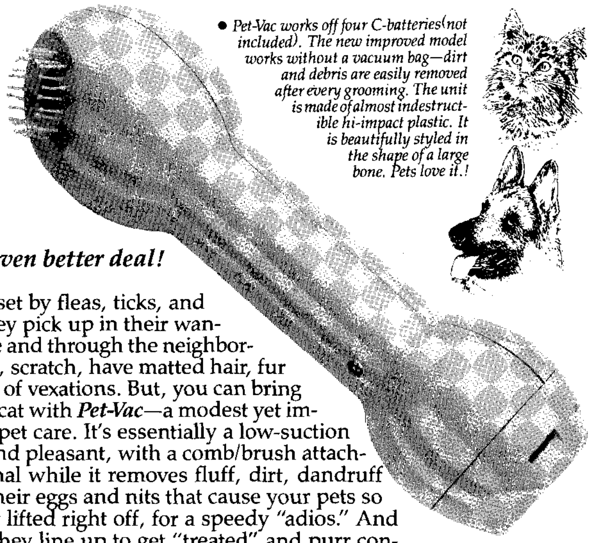

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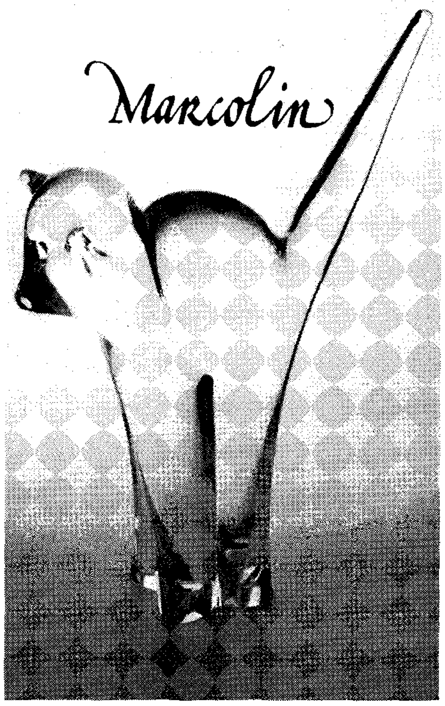

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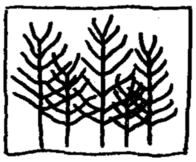
rain shower. He parks his hydraulic rig—it's red and has a splintered windshield—and he and an assistant begin to unload twenty-foot drill-bit sections for his second dig. Bentley admits what Fred Neumann suspected—that he hadn't put much thought into choosing the first spot. He had just plopped the rig down and dug a hole in a flat area behind the spot where the house would be. "Water's always a mystery," says Bentley, a sturdy man of thirty-two with short-cropped reddish-brown hair. He is wearing thin gold neck chains and has one cheek puffed out over a plug of tobacco. He raises a thirty-five-foot derrick and hooks on the drill bit, fastening it to the drill with a king-size pipe wrench that he refers to as chain tongs.



Bentley has occasionally used dowsers, at a customer's request or out of affection for the ones he knows. He finds them sincere and modest people, and, besides, he says, "anybody's guess is just as good." Bentley had mentioned Fred Neumann's trip out here to a friend of his named Max Trowbridge, who is also a dowser, and Trowbridge headed over to the lot soon afterward to give a second opinion. I went over, too, and talked to him there. "It boggles my mind when Miles just puts the rig down and starts to dig," said Trowbridge, who offers his locating work free, as a public service. A retired wastewater-treatment engineer who learned witching from his father, who is now ninety-three, Trowbridge, at fifty-seven, is unblinkingly secure in his talent. But he does go a shade red when people refer to him as a witch. "People kind of smirk when they hear about it," Trowbridge said, twisting a scallop of a Kentucky-colonel mustache. "If I couldn't do it myself, I'd say, 'This is ridiculous.' " When he's on his way to a job, he hides his willow branch under his shirt. "The thing is, I always find water. I can follow a vein or a pipeline right into the house."

Neumann had made a beeline for his choice of well sites on the two-acre lot, but Trowbridge's style was more meticulous. He had insisted that Neumann's marker be removed before his arrival. "You want to do right by the property owner," he explained. "Besides, it's your reputation." After an hour of laborious pacing, he had singled out three sites "at the junctions of underground streams." One was a scant five feet from Neumann's spot, where the driller is now setting up his rig as the rain subsides to a drizzly mist.

Having grown up in the family's drilling business, Miles Bentley quickly differentiates his appreciation for dowsers from belief in their witching powers. As he stirs up a batch of quick-gel "drilling mud," which will coat the sides of the borehole and keep it from caving in, he explains why. "Drilling a well costs ten to fifteen dollars a foot, plus the casing. You tell the customer that he has hired you to dig the hole, not to produce water, but very few people understand that. If the customer wants a witch, it's a relief. Your witch is cheap, he's quick, and he takes the heat off the driller for a dry hole." Bentley reserves his disapproval for the scientists—geologists and hydrologists—who are sometimes called in to select drilling locations for larger projects. "They might stand around and feel the mud a little bit," he says. "They might talk about Precambrian rocks, and blah-blah-blah."

Would Bentley ever consult a geologist?

"Never," he says, and spits tobacco juice into the weeds. "They can't tell you anything useful at this point. They can't pinpoint a well."

These objects of Bentley's contempt have an explanation for the mysteries of groundwater which sheds some light on the driller's attitude toward them and on the persistence of dowsing into the technological age. I was told by Richard Bissell, the geologist in charge of groundwater at Michigan's Geological Survey, "Geologists can say a great deal about the general picture—how and when the rocks were laid down and what kinds of pressures they have been subjected to, for example. But unless you dig test holes or conduct expensive seismic testing you can't be sure where water will be. Given the mosaic of rock and soil formations underground, pinpointing water is more of an art form."

Without a simple, common-sense solution, the uncommon sense of Fred Neumann persists. "Dowsing is most common where water is least predictable," Bissell observed, and in the area around the lot on North Territorial Road it is notoriously unpredictable.

"Some drillers won't even come out here!" Bentley shouts as his drill blasts into the earth. "You might miss the water and the customer gets mad!" The driller does have a few geological clues to guide him in estimating groundwater depth. He knows that the solid bedrock in this area, which was the floor of a three-hundred-and-twenty-million-year-old ocean, tends to start somewhere between a hundred and fifty and two hundred feet—although "there are always surprises."

Like various other states, Michigan is trying to create a clearer record of underground water by requiring more detailed records from the drillers. Beyond Richard Bissell's office at the Geological Survey is a maze of partitions leading to the Groundwater Data Base Station, where printouts of Michigan well records dangle like white tongues from a bank of computers. The data are being compiled, county by county, and will someday be projected onto a three-dimensional state-groundwater map. Records for only four of Michigan's eighty-three counties have been completed in the project's first two years, however, so it may be some time before science produces a method of detecting groundwater patterns which is any quicker and more reliable than a forked stick.

As Miles Bentley's drill blasts fifteen feet into the ground, the drilling mud churns through the hollow rotary bit. A three-hundred-gallon mud pan that has been set up beside the rig begins to fill with material from the hole, loosened by the bit and carried upward by the rising mud. These "cuttings" settle out, and Bentley's weather-beaten assistant silently shovels them into the weeds, stirring up the cool scent of damp earth. Meanwhile, the drilling mud is pumped back into the deepening hole.

"A lot of people who live in cities think no one digs wells anymore!" Bentley shouts above the roar of the drill. "They think water is something you get when you turn on the tap. But when they're sweating it out watching a driller work they suddenly realize the consequences of not having water. This property is worthless without a well. The owner is desperate. He has called me every day for two weeks. I'm pretty sure he's got some dry holes here already that he hasn't told me about."

Bentley dips a squashed kitchen sieve into the mud pan and examines the

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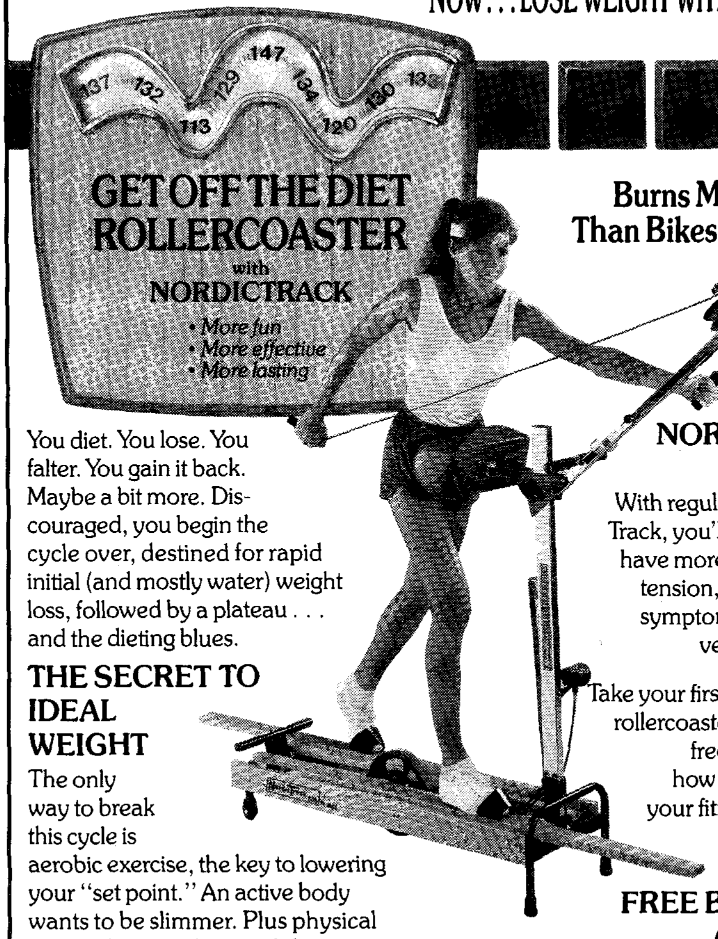

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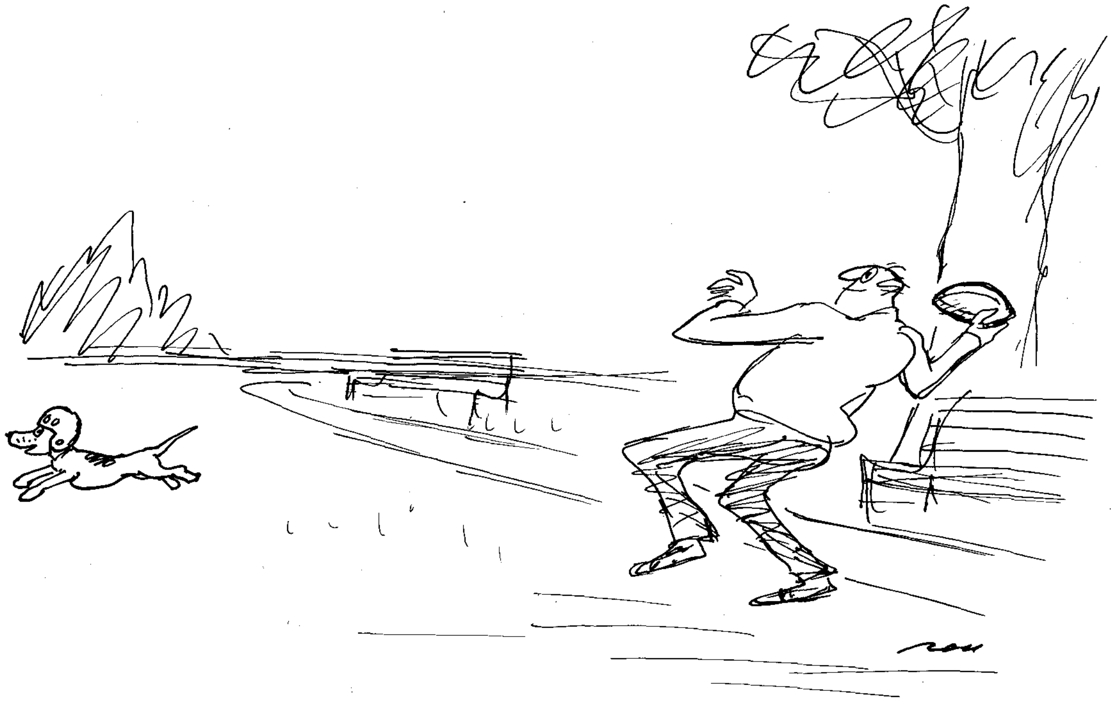

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cuttings. "Most people think wells go down to pools or rivers," he says. "They think a vein behaves like water rushing through a pipe. Groundwater's not like that. It lies down there in beds of gravel. Or it's hidden in cracks in the bedrock that you might hit by luck." The wells around here draw their water from "water sand"—streaks of permeable sand and gravel that were deposited in layers of sediment above the bedrock when the last glaciers left Michigan, fourteen thousand years ago. "A lot of people will tell you there's water everywhere. Sure, but the hard part's getting it out," Bentley says, and he scoops up more cuttings and holds out a fistful. "Right now the drill is going through clay. There's water in clay, but the particles are too fine. It won't release the water." He squeezes the clay, packing it into a ball. "There's gravel in there, which is what we want, but it's not round or coarse enough. We're after the bigger gravel, with lots of space in between, where water can be." When the drill hits water, it won't spurt up from the ground like an artesian well, he adds, and explains, "We'll know by the cuttings and by the sound and speed of the drill going down." Suddenly, the rig begins to thunder and quake. "Tree stump!" Bentley calls out, and blasts some more tobacco juice into the weeds. "You've gotta know your rig."

As the drill approaches sixty feet, the rain has stopped and the field is drying under hazy sunshine. Shirts and sweatshirts lie in clumps on the puddled field. Bentley's assistant, Duane Wescoat, who is fifty-two, has stripped to T-shirt and Levi's; he smokes and shovels, his face half-hidden behind a Yosemite Sam mustache, his biceps rippling under a tattoo of a jagged heart. Wescoat has been a driller's assistant all his life. "Been playing in the mud thirty-seven years," he says when he pauses to light another cigarette. "I used to keep a pair of bent coat hangers on the truck—they're supposed to swing together when you walk over water." He has latterly joined the world of skeptics, but, he says, "a lot of drilling men still do that." He smokes silently for a few minutes, then tosses his cigarette away and returns to shovelling out the mud pan.

The two men hoist a fourth drill-bit section onto the derrick. "We're going for eighty feet!" Bentley shouts as the drill roars into action again. He scoops up another sieveful of cuttings and shakes his head. "We're still getting clay." Anxiety flickers on his face, but, as drillers say, "it always looks bad until we hit water."

"There's a lot of worrying in this business," Bentley says. He mentions a recurring dream he has in which the big red rig tips over, bubbles down into the mud, and disappears. "But once in a while you run into something interesting. It's pretty chopped up, but you can imagine things that have been buried down there for thousands of years. Yesterday, we pumped out an old seabed. There were bits of shells and snails. We probably drill through old civilizations. There were Indian villages all around." He abandons his reverie, leans over the mud pan, and grabs a handful of coarse gravel. "There's your water sand," he says. "We'll see how wide the vein is." After drilling through ten feet of the larger gravel, Bentley waves to his assistant. Wescoat gives a tight-lipped nod, shuts off the rig, and hauls up the string of drill bits. "It looks like a well," Bentley says, in the sudden quiet. "But it's not over till the water's coming out."

The chirping of crickets replaces the roar of the drill as the two men line the narrow hole with ten-foot lengths of pipe and install a filtering screen at the base. It is seventy-five feet to the bottom of the hole—just five feet below Fred Neumann's prediction.

In an operation that suggests a child blowing bubbles through a straw into a glass of milk, the rig's compressor forces air down the pipe and into the water. Water shoots out of the hole, builds higher and higher, and plunges back to earth in a thirty-foot waterfall.

"It's a keeper!" Bentley shouts, grinning and wiping his brow. "That water we just hit has been underground for maybe a thousand years. No matter how many times you've done it, it's like solving a mystery. It's always a rush when you find it."

WATER witching has traditionally been the province of mavericks like Fred Neumann and Max Trowbridge, but beneath the casual surface of most American pursuits lies an organization; thus, the American Society of Dowsers, Inc. The group, which was founded in 1961, has its headquarters in Danville, Vermont; it has sixty-eight local chapters, as far afield as Florida and Alaska, and also links to dowsing groups in England, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. The A.S.D. holds its annual conference in Danville, between the Green and White Mountain chains, when mid-September colors are blazing through Vermont's northeastern woods.

The granite hills between Burlington and Danville were formed three hundred and fifty million years ago by tectonic collisions that compressed and sealed and fractured the rock. Some hundred thousand years ago, advancing glaciers turned the Appalachian Mountains into a geological jigsaw puzzle and, as they retreated, blanketed the mountains with fine-grained clay sediments. In the hilly areas around Danville, the clay contains little water sand. Groundwater lies in ancient fractures whose twists and turns are so elusive that, according to the official State Geologist of Vermont, Dr. Charles Ratté, "well drillers go into the rock almost one hundred per cent guessing."

This is dowser country. A land of whitewashed houses, red barns, and green pastures rippling into woods, it has plentiful water but so few surface clues that the chances of pinpointing a good well are close to even for geologists, dowsers, and drillers relying on the irreverent "beer-cap method" (pop a tab and drill wherever it lands); dowsers, therefore, can show a good record of success. Since there is always the risk of a meagrely producing well or a dry hole, "people want to feel secure before they pay out three or four thousand dollars," Ratté says. "Probably thirty or forty per cent of the wells in Vermont are dowsed."

A three-way sign at Danville's combined bus station and general store directs visitors to the town's top attractions: "Morgan Horse Farms," "Sherryland Guests," and "American Society of Dowsers." It is drizzling lightly. Directly across the road is a field full of people—forty or more replicas of Fred C. Neumann zigzagging around a green expanse lined with portable toilets—pausing, turning, clustering and dispersing, their divining rods extended before them. At closer range, the scene is a procession of plaid-shirted woodsmen, cowboys in string ties and Stetsons, and wiry prospectors with trousers tightly lashed above their waists. There are women with parkas worn over pants suits and walking

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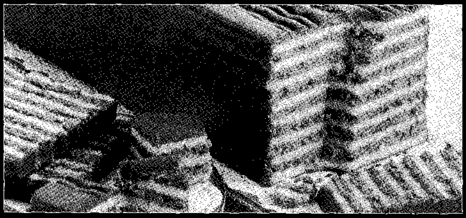

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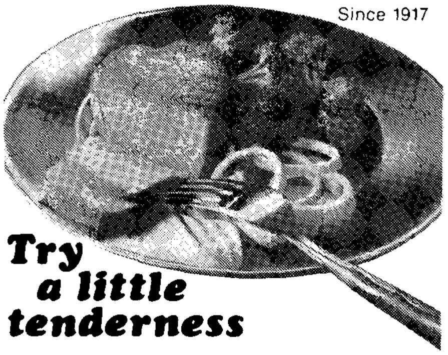

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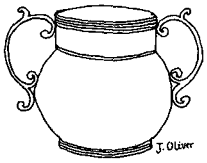
shoes. There are a dozen young bohemians, who are accompanied by yapping red-bandanna-collared dogs, and who have tossed their backpacks onto a gazebo in the center of the green and joined the dowsing throng.

The dowsers' instruments bear only a family resemblance to Fred Neumann's—there's not a forked stick among them. Each is a different configuration of wire and plastic, which is usually adorned with sparkling beads. Two lengths of plastic tubing beaded together at one end form a "Y rod," which is simply a designer version of the forked stick. The women favor hand-rigged pendulums, of crystals, walnuts, fishing sinkers, or doorknobs. The cowboys like pairs of copper wires bent square into "L rods" and gripped like a pair of six-shooters.



A total of a hundred and fifty-seven students are participating in the American Society of Dowsers pre-conference school. The conference begins tomorrow and lasts five days, offering a program as comprehensive as a meeting of the Modern Language Association. Ninety-three separate workshops are expected to draw a thousand dowsers, nearly doubling the local population. Today, the forty-odd novices are warming up for the week by testing what their instructor has dubbed their "natural dowsing abilities"—searching out the water pipes that run beneath the town green—as the afternoon drizzle gathers into a downpour.

"It always rains when the dowsers come," says a voice from a chorus of local citizens gathered on the general-store porch to watch the earnest activities on the green. "Then, after a week, they leave and the rain stops. It never fails."

Danville residents have been practicing the fine New England art of keeping a straight face during a fall invasion ever since 1958. That was the year the first dowsing gathering was held, as Danville's novelty contribution to a seven-town annual Fall Foliage Festival. Three water witches lived in town. "Locating" had been traditional around these rocky uplands for as long as anyone could remember. According to a local driller, Howard Manosh, more than half of the roughly five hundred wells he drills each year are still dowsed, at the customers' request.

Increasingly large and devoted crowds attending the demonstrations in 1959 and 1960 led to the formation, the next year, of the American Society of Dowsers, which has a flag, a code, a prayer, an insignia, and a motto—"Indago Felix," or "the fruitful search." It has its own Betsy Ross, too—a Filipino grandmother named Josefa Rivera who sits in a rocking chair in Quezon City and cross-stitches a short, earnest poem known as the Dowser's Prayer onto samplers, which are sent to Vermont. Señora Rivera attacks her duties with such zeal that enough samplers have piled up in the Danville municipal vault to make possible a Dowser of the Year award through 2035.

The A.S.D. has its own cosmology, an elaboration of traditional dowsing lore formulated by one of its Master Dowsers, the late Jack Livingston. He believed that fresh water surges up in columns from deep inside the earth. It forms vast "domes" at the tops of hills and mountains, then descends in veins resembling the tentacles of an octopus. This view of underground "live" water, which suggests the age-old symbolism of the tree of life, is at odds with basic scientific principles. Science tells us that groundwater—indeed, nearly all the fresh water on earth—has its origin in the sequence of precipitation, runoff, and evaporation known as the hydrologic cycle. The society's members reject the scientific model and recite personal encounters with water domes like epic verses: "Last week, I hit a dome, and the sucker shot up, and the whole place was flooded." The tales are accompanied by solemn warnings against drilling "between the eyes of the octopus," or directly into the top of the dome. To do that, Livingston said, could break the vacuum pressure in the whole system and cause the water to plummet far into the earth. The water-dome paradigm carries echoes of ancient lore: the Sumerians viewed the earth as a mountain rising from an infinite sea, and Thales of Miletos, the founder of Greek science and philosophy, taught that the world floated on water, the fundamental and sustaining principle of the universe.

Jack Livingston, the society's own philosopher, was a beefy highway-construction foreman given to string ties and ten-gallon hats. His portrait is enshrined in a pantheon of Master

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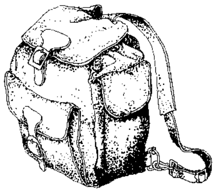

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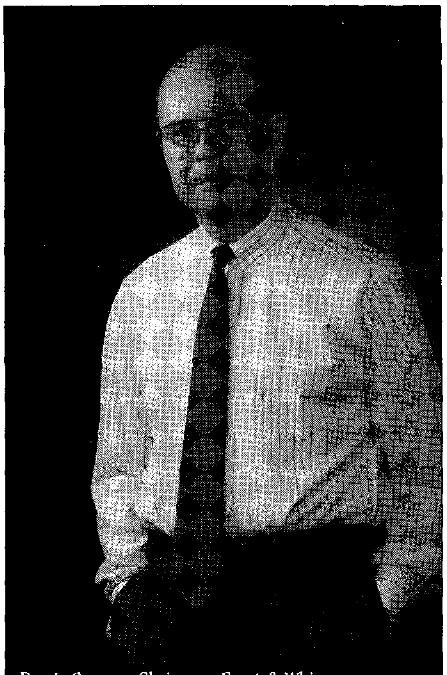
Dowsers on the walls of Dowsers Hall, just down the hill from the general store. Another portrait is labelled "General Patton's Water Dowser." It shows a long-faced, knuckle-bald California real-estate agent named Ralph Harris, who looks like Fred Neumann in a business suit. As the dowsers tell it, Captain Harris landed in Morocco with Patton's army in 1942. The Germans had blown up all the water wells, and the Army engineers were drilling dry holes in the desert. Harris secured an audience with the General and promised to locate a good well if only the commander would grant him a forked willow branch. Patton, it is said, seized his field telephone and requisitioned an entire willow tree, and the tree swooped in by air express the next day. Although history has ignored Captain Harris, his friends in the society and his widow, who lives in a Hollywood apartment, assert that he located eighteen wells for General Patton before leaving North Africa.

In an office behind the portrait gallery, a year-round paid staff of three attends to the A.S.D.'s perpetually ringing phone. Outside the window, R.V.s and pickups are pulling up to Dowsers Hall, some with special-order "DOWSER" license plates from various states. People are coming into the white Colonial headquarters building to select workshops, make lodging arrangements, and pick up their identification badges. The badge is a disk festooned with ribbons, which, in one old gentleman's raspy assessment, "makes me look like the business end of a peacock."

Even the most scornful Danville residents concede that the conference is a local gold mine. Nearly every household harbors a boarding dowser or two. Organizations ranging from the Masonic Order to the high-school P.T.A. hold fund-raising dinners and country breakfasts, and most of the public buildings are rented out for workshops or other meetings. Though the high-school soccer team, jogging across the town green on its daily workout, taunts the dowsers, they have earned a reputation here as a trustworthy breed of gentle "flakes." The residents' only long-standing complaint is registered in crayoned signs: "NO DOWSER PARKING" at the post office and "NO NO NO DOWSER PARKING" in front of the bank.

Along with its economy, the legend-



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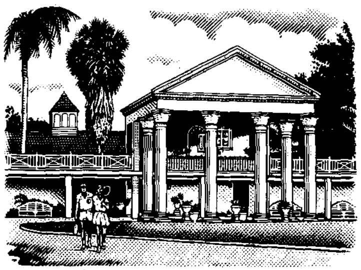

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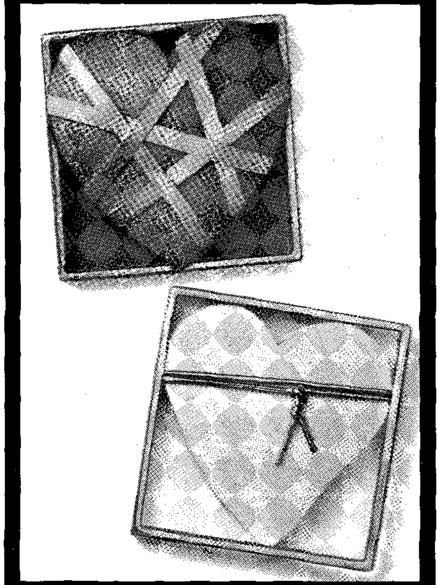

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ary life of Danville thrives on the annual invasion. This afternoon, a stream of dowsing tales flows from the general-store porch, fed by rivulets of gossip from every corner of town. For some members of the society, dowsing has apparently gone beyond "the fruitful search" for water and become a life style. Last night at The Creamery, it is recounted, someone dowsed a chicken salad, then indignantly sent it back to the kitchen; also, half of the restaurant's spoons have disappeared. Yesterday, a Danville matron came home to find that her vegetarian boarders had liberated a pair of Cornish hens she was thawing in the kitchen sink and were ceremoniously burying them in her gladiolus bed.

Such stories hardly raise eyebrows in Danville any longer, but in the last few years some rather more disturbing manifestations of the dowsing life have surfaced. On the steps of the town hall this morning, a frenetic young woman fluttered her hands above the head of a local P.T.A. member and offered to heal her. A little later, half a dozen conferees were spotted huddled in a corner of the Methodist church, picking satanic entities off each other like fleas.

"It was O.K. when they were just doing the water thing," Bruce Lafferty, the general store's co-owner, says. "Most of the farmers around here have their wells dowsed. It's traditional."

"But now it's not just water. It's all this other stuff," an anonymous lounger chimes in. "One lady who comes here claims she has conversations with the earwigs in her garden. Her husband's an exorcist. They'll haul out farm horses and stand around in a circle measuring their auras. They're talking about healing. They're talking about spirits—"

Lafferty interrupts, saying, "These days, they hardly talk about water at all."

Down at the firehouse, where a workshop on "Basic Dowsing" is about to begin, Dwin Gordon, the A.S.D. school's co-director, says much the same thing. A squinty seventy-seven-year-old W. C. Fields look-alike from Portland, Maine, Gordon champions the society's conservative wing, or what he calls "straight water dowsers." Gordon himself claims over thirty-three hundred successful wells dowsed, mostly since he gave up being

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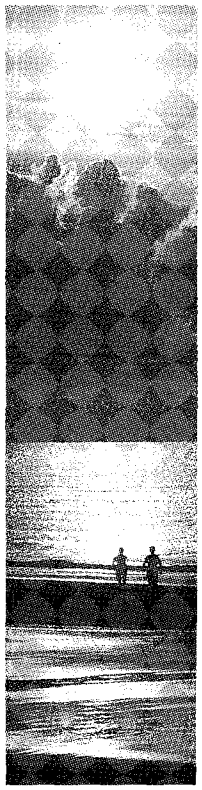

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a travelling tire salesman, back in 1957. Today, Gordon is giving a chalk talk to a roomful of novices, some of whom are taking notes and many of whom are nodding in agreement. "After you locate your underground vein with your L rods or your Y rods or your pendulum, take this bobber," he tells them. "Grab it like so." He holds a single length of plastic tubing at paunch level and flails it like a maestro's baton. "Start counting how many times the rascal goes up and down." He holds the pose, then explains, "One bob, one foot." As several students scribble down the information, Gordon reassures them: "Ay-yup, you're in the fur-lined pot now." At the end of his lecture, he removes his dark glasses and says, with unexpected solemnity, "We hope some of you in the younger generation will take this up and carry it on."

The plea has a special poignancy, because most of Gordon's students are about his age. The younger conference-goers are up the street at sessions on "Unfolding Crystal Consciousness," "Aura Dowsing," and "Earth Energies." Gordon has said that "there wouldn't even be any water at the conference if it weren't for a half-dozen of us who hounded the hell out of 'em."

In its early years, the A.S.D. was a rugged fraternity of old country boys and military men drawn to a male-dominated utilitarian activity. The dowser viewed the rod as more like his lawnmower or his electric drill than like a Ouija board or a crystal ball. Dowsing was a converging of all sorts of traditional male roles, from prospector and range rider to tinkerer, protector, and provider of basic needs. The cigar-brandishing, guffawing water dowsers who used to gather in Danville to swap stories and compare rods had no interest in other apparently paranormal human faculties.

The dominion of the good old boys spanned the A.S.D.'s first two decades, but with the advent of an annual West Coast conference, first held in Santa Cruz in 1981, "all hell broke loose," according to Gordon. Bangled and beaded and disconcertingly feminine, the New Age swarmed forth from the sun-kissed beaches of California, urging its psychic paraphernalia on the dowsers. The dowsers stood rooted to their earthy ways, but, even so, everything was changed. The locker-room

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banter gradually took on a bug-eyed reverence. Hardboiled Neanderthals began talking about "penetrating Mother Earth." A few old boys were even seen joining hands to lumber through looping Cretan mazes chalked in the grass by the willowy creatures of the New Age. The stubble-bearded conference organizer, John Wayne Blassingame, even though he advertises in the Santa Cruz phone book as "John Wayne the Dowser" and considers himself a water holdout, admits, "Once you accept that dowsing is a mental phenomenon, the rest just naturally follows. You can't keep it out."

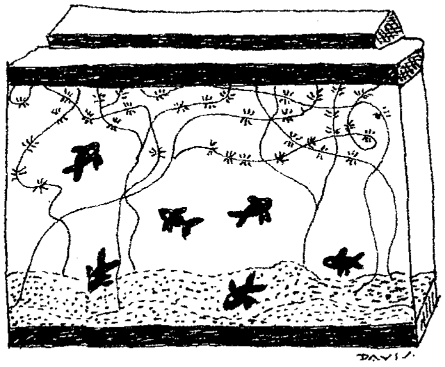
At last year's West Coast conference, however, Blassingame did try to stem the tide of the New Age takeover by keeping the teaching sessions centered on water. Making his rounds one morning, in a Hawaiian shirt and cowboy boots, Blassingame found a circle of students gathered in a redwood grove. The instructor, a stumpy, genial fellow, had allowed the topic to drift into dental diagnosis and was working his L rods over a young volunteer's root canals. Blassingame saw red, halted the session, and implored all concerned, "Get back to water. Let's talk about things you can see. Don't mess with the gray matter."

At the Danville firehouse today, Dwin Gordon shows the same dogged loyalty to the functional side of dowsing. "I think it's ninety per cent mental, but I don't like to go into that," he tells me. "People snap." Clearly, even the Old Guard has come to a tacit recognition that it's all ESP. What controls the rod's action is unconscious muscular movement triggered by the dowser's mental epiphanies. Like Fred Neumann back in Michigan, Gordon has found that he can work without dowsing instruments, but he prefers the masculine security of his trusty rods. Since Gordon himself is about as mystical as a potato, it takes a while for a newcomer to grasp that what he's lecturing about today, up there at the portable chalkboard, with his locker-room anecdotes and his shop-class diagrams, is how to wallop a vein of water into a new underground spot. It proves to be a case of mind over matter safely supplemented by a T bar and a sledgehammer.

As he collects his tools and prepares for a hands-on demonstration behind the firehouse, Gordon explains how he discovered "vein diversion," as he calls his latest accomplishment. "I had a business waterproofing basements," he says. "I would locate the vein of water with L rods, find out how deep it was, and pump it full of bentonite clay to seal the leak. Then we'd put drains in to keep the basement floor dry. One day, I had driven a bar into the ground to make a hole for the clay, and I was trying to get the bar out. I was belting it with a mallet and cussing, as usual. Then I noticed the hole was dry. The vein of water was gone. I thought, If you can knock those suckers out, why go through all the trouble of sealing off the basement? So now my partner and I just chase the vein out with a T bar and knock off. I've diverted water veins out of basements two, three hundred times. Most people can't swallow it. They ask, 'How do you do it?' I say, 'I don't know, and I don't give a damn.' "

Gordon's boot-camp logic is shared by the A.S.D.'s Old Guard, the overwhelming majority of whom are ex-marines and other retired military men. "I'm gonna go in there and clean it up," Gordon proclaims as he stands against a wall draped with firemen's yellow ponchos and yellow hard hats. "I'm not gonna deal with any of your whys." A dozen admiring students follow him out behind the firehouse. There he locates a vein with his L rods, shoves a metal stake into the damp earth, and begins clanging on it in the direction he wants the vein to move. Then he checks its progress with his L rods. "Not moving very fast," he says. "Let's really bring her down." He bludgeons the bar a half-dozen times, steps back, and cocks his head thoughtfully.

Immediately, five students rush in with rods and pendulums. One, a woman in a down vest and sweatpants, holds a wildly swinging doorknob attached to a chain. "It's really moving fast now," she tells Gordon as he keeps transplanting the stake and flogging it.



"We're chasing this baby around in a circle," Gordon explains. "Anyone able to pick it up now?"

A chorus comes back:

"Yup, Dwin."

"She's hanging right along the edge."

"Whistling right along, Dwin."

A tiny, mouse-faced woman wearing a green visor takes three guest shots with the mallet. Gordon whistles, and says, "You're hotter than a bank robber's pistol."

A male voice complains, "They don't move that fast for me."

And a dour-faced middle-aged man, tufts of hair fringing his black beret, who has been lurking on the sidelines, suddenly smiles. "I feel so stupid," he says. "It's all clear now."

Before the class adjourns, Gordon insists that its members whale the vein back to where he found it. "You have to respect Mother Earth," he says, invoking an A.S.D. commandment.

When that job is done, and Gordon is stumping up the hill toward the town hall's spaghetti luncheon, a woman in Birkenstocks hurries after him to suggest that he try a seaweed diet to lose weight. "Don't it raise hell with your sex life?" he says, with a wink and a chortle. The woman is one of a handful of people under fifty who attended Gordon's talk. "The water people are mostly old farts like me," he laments when she has retreated. "We can't seem to get the young people into it. You show them how to dowse for water and they're tickled spitless. It's like getting their first piece of tail. Then someone shows 'em a crystal ball and tells 'em it'll make their ears wiggle, and they're off. They're not interested in water anymore."

Since the California contingent "turned this whole thing into a carnival," as Gordon puts it, the more staid Vermont conference has also strayed far from water, and expanded to include every psychic activity from investigating past lives to "clearing" haunted houses. This week in Vermont, the students will hear lectures covering a spectrum from traditional A.S.D. topics, like "Pitfalls of Shallow Wells in Clay," to "Ghost Finding via Dowsing." Perhaps as a concession to the group's old-timers, even the kinkier topics have a utilitarian ring: "Prevent Highway Accidents," "Dowsing in Real Estate," and "Personal Fitness Through Dowsing"—

this last a rap session on psychic healing, a subject, as it turns out, officially prohibited by the society.

While Dwin Gordon knows that "this spiritual stuff" is what draws the crowds to Danville, he warns his students to watch out for tricks. "We've got some real yahoos in the organization," he tells them. "Some playing with half a deck. They'll take a three-dollar crystal and charge you fifty dollars for it. As soon as someone puts his hands over your head and starts fluttering them, take off. Sooner or later, he'll open up the back of his truck and sell you some snake oil."

The small platoon of water loyalists marching up the hill toward the town hall passes people with alarmed expressions who have come out of the Methodist church. They are retreating from a lecture on the urgency of peppering the planet with wildflower seeds to replace the world's radiation-zapped supply. The projects and elixirs of the lecturer, Louis Matacia, have earned him this terse assessment from Gordon: "I wouldn't let him dowse my well if I were you." It is Matacia, though, a man with an awry grin and a soft Virginia drawl, who is responsible for one of dowsing's closest brushes with respectability.

During the late sixties, Matacia, an engineer at the Triangle Research Corporation, in Quantico, Virginia, was serving as a consultant to the United States Marines. Convinced that his dowsing talents could be adapted by troops in Vietnam to locate enemy tunnels and land mines, he wrote to the Counter Guerrilla Warfare Command, at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. "With just a bent coat hanger and a little practice," he asserted, "anyone can master the technique with the exception of atheists, morons, disbelievers or the mentally disturbed." At Camp LeJeune, Matacia was put through tests that challenged him to locate caches of equipment and underground tunnels. The results prompted an engineer observer who was also a member of the A.S.D., one H. J. MacCotter, to write the United States Defense Department a letter, which is now in the Dowsers Hall archives. The engineer advised the Pentagon that serious investigation by the military was warranted, and went on to say, "I am also aware that what may be useful to us could also be useful to the enemy, although they, being Communist, part of

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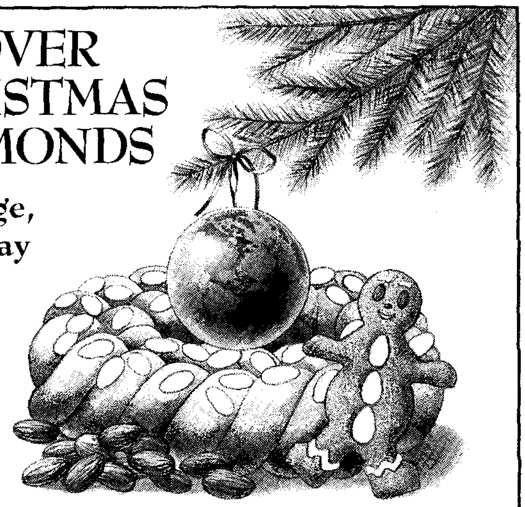

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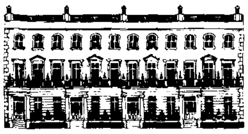

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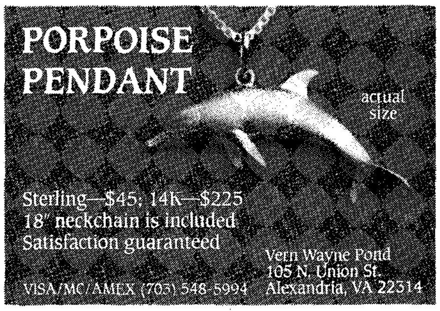

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the ideology being atheism, I am quite certain they would automatically be precluded from effective use as an aggressive tactic."

An Army review concluded officially that Matacia's method was not militarily practical. Nevertheless, the *Times* reported, on October 13, 1967, that hard-bitten United States marines were using twisted metal coat hangers, which the United States Forces' Saigon *Observer* referred to in another article as "Matacia's Wire Rudders," to locate underground tunnels, mines, and booby traps all over Vietnam.

AT the town hall's luncheon, a pale, dark-haired young woman introduces herself with languid assurance as Grover Cleveland. Tomorrow, amid a glinting heap of amethysts, aquamarines, and rose quartzes the size of small boulders, she will demonstrate the art of crystal healing on the figure of her husband, Frank, as he reclines on a massage table. Next to Grover Cleveland, a man of about thirty, with "Zeke" written on his nametag, nervously shakes green powder onto his ratatouille. He underscores a point he has been making by conceding, "I think there's a place for Western medicine."

Zeke's teacher at the dowsing school was Dwin Gordon, and when the old-timer's name is mentioned Zeke frowns. He finds Gordon boorish, right down to his name. ("I only saw the name Dwin once before," Gordon happily admits, in his W. C. Fields voice, "and that was on a can of roach spray.") Zeke is irked by the dowser's male chauvinism, his rough language, and his bragging that he uses L rods to hunt deer.

But the crystal healer, draped like a swan across a metal folding chair, offers a kinder view. "A lot of these dowsers are cigar-chomping old men in string ties with a coffee mug in one hand and a jelly doughnut in the other," she says. "They don't look the part at all, but their brain waves say they are highly evolved."

Could she mean the beer-bellied hayseeds of the Old Guard?

"Yes," she says, with patient serenity, and one arm gestures gracefully toward a squat druid at the next table. "They're yogi masters."

A few seats away, a tall young man in red suspenders enthusiastically concurs. "If they weren't all out there running around with sticks and talking about digging wells, we wouldn't be here," he says. "The water is a good cover. A lot of people buy it. If they knew some of the things that go on here, the A.M.A. would shut us down. Besides, guys like Dwin Gordon, they keep us grounded. They keep us from getting too excited."

The A.S.D.'s current state of affairs has historical parallels. After the modern début of water divining, in the early seventeenth century, dowsers were often accused of using the utilitarian quest for water as a cover for more controversial experiments. The French Baron and Baronne de Beausoleil, credited with popularizing water dowsing throughout Europe, were later convicted of dabbling in the "black arts," and both died in prison around 1645. Later in the seventeenth century, dowsers found themselves the focus of an ecclesiastical debate over whether the rod's movement was due to divine or satanic forces. After Gaspard Schott, a Jesuit, denounced the divining rod as an instrument of the Devil, in 1660, some dowsers tried to deflect public suspicion by baptizing their instruments along with a child, so that they might call them by a Christian name.

Other seventeenth-century dowsers, however, found water divining to be a natural step to more esoteric uses of the rod. A scandalous chapter in dowsing's history came toward the end of the century, when dowsing criminologists appeared. The most famous of them was Jacques Aymar, of Lyons, who told of feeling his rod turn violently over the buried remains of a murdered woman one day as he was searching for water. His stick then pointed to her husband, and the husband fled—an episode that established Aymar in the popular mind as capable of tracing murderers, and launched him on a legal career. Accompanied by court-appointed archers, Aymar pursued his bobbing *baguette* all over Europe, and his imitators dashed around like rain-befuddled ants. The French press ate it up for a decade. Meanwhile, theorists stroked their beards and pronounced that a certain *matière meurtrière*, or murderous matter, given off by the killer was causing Aymar's stick to jerk and wrench.

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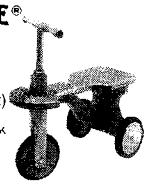

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zealots recruited Jacques Aymar and his *baguette* to identify Protestants for massacre. In 1701, the Inquisition banned the use of dowsing in criminal prosecution, and the rod returned to the utilitarian realm of water finding.

Now, as the American Society of Dowsers pivots back toward the spiritual realm, the dowsing criminologists have reappeared. Some members tell of getting together to ferret out public fugitives and locate missing children by dangling pendulums over maps or newspaper photographs and asking yes-or-no questions.

ALTHOUGH the younger wing of the A.S.D. has taken the lead in drawing the group deeper and deeper into psychic space, it is a set of eighty-one-year-old twins in California who are pushing the edge of the envelope. "We're the farthest out," Harold and Gerald Estep admit, in chorus. Always dressed identically, in golf sweaters and natty bolo ties, their matching Gerber-baby faces smiling beneath duck-billed caps, they call each other Shadow and Shadow. They sometimes lapse into communicating in a soft patter of dits and dahs—the Morse code they learned as Naval Intelligence officers during the Second World War.

One afternoon at the Santa Cruz A.S.D. conference, the twins led me to a redwood glade where they had spent the morning sexing gophers. "Here, you try it, little darlin'," Gerald urged me, holding out a pair of thin metal rods and leaning over to be dowsed. "If the rods cross, I'm a male. If they stay straight, I'm a female." Harold bent forward while I dowsed Gerald, so I dowsed Harold, too, making sure to give the rods a healthy swing of confirmation each time. An hour later, the twins changed into identical powder-blue cardigans and were off to St. Joseph's Shrine in Santa Cruz to dowse a travelling replica of the Shroud of Turin. By evening, they had established the authenticity of the original by measuring the copy's energy with L rods, and multiplying the data by ten.

The Estep twins are passionate apologists for dowsing's ancient lineage. They trace "the fruitful search" to "man's earliest days on earth," when, they believe, dowsing enabled Cro-Magnon water seekers to survive. They have written a series of poems which amounts to a modest dowsing

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epic, though the composing process itself is somewhat hazy, the poems being signed by both twins, each of whom claims the other to be the principal author. An example of their work is the first stanza of "Acceptance of Dowsing":

Many, many years ago
The Clergy, with narrow vision,
Banned dowsing to the common man,
A Sixth Sense was their reason—
A "Sense" beyond the normal Five
Must, somehow, be Divine, they thought;
Therefore, use of dowsing rods
To Clergy be confined, (What rot)!

Gerald received early encouragement for his poetry when Robert Frost visited his undergraduate poetry class at Occidental College, in the nineteen-thirties. After scanning a sheaf of student efforts, Gerald recalls, Frost crankily declared Gerald the only poet in the room.

When the Esteps served as Navy commanders, during the Second World War and also in Korea, they often called upon their dowsing skills, which they had honed since their farmland boyhoods. They located everything from water to corpses. "During the forties, I was in charge of a phase of intelligence for the Central Pacific," Gerald says. "My brother, Harold, was in charge of a phase of intelligence for the South Pacific." Did military decisions ever hinge on the spin of an L rod, I ask. There is no answer—only the soft staccato of the twins communing in Morse code.

Four watery brown eyes glitter with happiness when the subject shifts to "thought-form projection." The Esteps dabble in building "thought-form fences"—invisible psychic barriers that can be erected mentally and put to a range of uses, from stopping enemy troops to shutting bewildered rabbits out of the vegetable garden. The notion gives chills to folks like Dwin Gordon and John Wayne the Dowser, but the twins believe that water dowsing is just "basic training" for higher psychic commands.

"We're open to all possibilities," Gerald says.

"All possibilities," Harold says.

THE collision of backwoods and New Age may have split the American Society of Dowsers, but there is solidarity on all sides of the table one morning at breakfast in Danville, when conversation veers to the dowser's hidden role in American society.

Early risers have gathered at paper-draped picnic tables set up in the Masonic Hall. Over scrambled eggs and country sausage, a retired engineer named Thomas Milliren tells of routinely using rods and pendulums during his tenure as manager of warranty administration for General Electric's transportation-systems division in Erie, Pennsylvania. Once, he says, he divined an innovative method for repairing leaky motor seals. "I took my pendulum and kept asking 'Is it this way?' until I came up with it," he recalls. "I got a certificate for saving the company over a million dollars."

Nearby, Greg Storozuk, a Colorado cowboy with bushy gray sideburns, who says he makes his living by dowsing for an oil company, mentions that the last five out of seven oil wells he located were good ones. He fingers a pair of retractable metal L rods clipped into his breast pocket like ballpoint pens. His record of successes is what keeps him employed, he adds. But, like Dwin Gordon, he has no need to know how his methods work. "Do you know how your TV works, or your car?" he asks.

"I doubt if you're gonna find any phone or utility company where the actual workers don't use dowsing," Storozuk says. A dozen heads nod in agreement. There are testimonials from a New Hampshire electrician, an engineer from the New England Telephone Company, and a Virginia plumber. The key phrase here is "actual workers." The world according to dowsers features a patient underground of workers toiling away with L rods and pendulums in basements and back rooms—in solemn anonymity—while the degreed and titled establishment knowingly serves up eyewash.

Storozuk tells of overhearing a conversation from his office at the oil company. "My picture had been in the paper after I found a leak under the floor of the Holiday Inn in Boulder using my L rods," he says. "Someone was asking my boss about me, and I heard him deny I worked there. He said, 'We use geologists. We don't go in for that hooey.' They have me on the payroll as a 'field specialist.'

"The question is: Why are we being suppressed by the scientific community?" Storozuk says.

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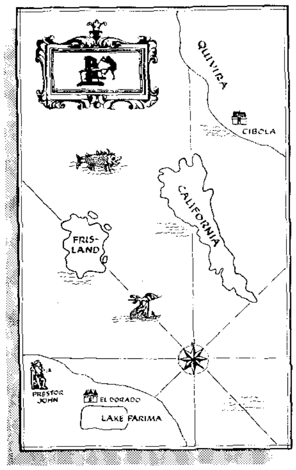

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The question requires no answer here. The dowsers live in a world made meaningful by vigilant unseen eyes. "I bet the F.B.I. is here," a brooding young man says. "The C.I.A. is here. They're concerned because the Russians are concerned about any kind of energy."

The A.S.D.'s international-affairs correspondent, Christopher Bird, is to deliver a lecture this afternoon in which he will describe late-night meetings in taper-lit rooms with Russian psychics from the Soviet government's Department of Theoretical Problems. Bird is the author of "The Divining Hand," which is sometimes referred to as the society's bible. He is revered among dowsers as one who brings credibility to the field, although no one here seems to have read his book. In 1983, Bird lectured on dowsing at an august assembly of the World Bank in Washington. Now he makes pilgrimages behind the Iron Curtain, where, he asserts, the Soviets have long carried on cloaked investigations into dowsing, calling it "the Biophysical Method."

The locals lounging in front of the general store after breakfast swap stories as they watch a handful of putterers dowsing the green for numbered metal disks, which can be exchanged for cheesecakes. According to Bruce Lafferty, "someone sent back the carrots at The Creamery last night because the vibes weren't right," and the spoons are still disappearing. Yesterday, a woman dowsed his produce bin for a ripe cantaloupe. There are more rumors of healings and exorcisms going on behind closed doors, and there is a sense that many Danville residents feel that things have finally gone too far. "We're thinking of asking the dowsers to go somewhere else," the now retired town clerk, Marjorie Greaves, says. The idea of asking the society to move has arisen before, but, according to Ms. Greaves, "Paul Sevigny has been a prime mover in keeping it here." Sevigny is a retired assistant superior-court judge, a pillar of the community, and a leading member of the A.S.D., who served as its president for four years.

"Paul does all this strange stuff without being weird," Lafferty says. A lot of people around here swear that Sevigny has retrieved lost passports and diamond rings by swinging a pendulum over a map. In contrast to the

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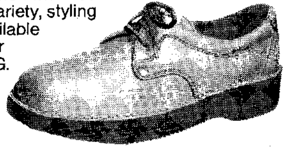

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gentle flakes cakewalking around the green, “Paul seems like a normal guy with a talent,” Lafferty adds.

This morning, Sevigny is two doors down the road, at the town hall, manning the society’s book-and-supplies table beneath hand-sewn satin banners proclaiming “Greater Boston ASD,” “Appalachian Dowsers,” and “Greater Manhattan ASD.” As he makes change for one customer, several others brandish rods and pendulums above the merchandise, an arsenal of gleaming shafts arrayed on the table. This is but a sampling of the instruments listed in a two-hundred-page illustrated catalogue entitled “Dowsing Devices.” It includes the Electrosense 300, which resembles a hypodermic needle mounted on a video camera; a many-hinged apparatus called the Polarizator II; and a twenty-inch length of Polish bratwurst, purported to flex and bob as gamely as any Y rod when it’s bent into a U shape and gripped at both ends.

A woman wearing a gypsy scarf and silver necklaces dangles an amethyst pendulum over the book titles “to see which one is right for me.” She never makes a move without consulting the pendulum, she says. She dowses to decide which movie to see, which dress to wear, and whether to go to work in the morning. “My husband even dowses to see if we should have sex,” she says. The woman’s devotion recalls the occult-minded Lady Milbanke, Lord Byron’s mother-in-law, at whose death the poet quipped that she had gone to a place where she could no longer dowse.

“I dowse for what to eat,” the woman in the gypsy scarf continues, “where to park, who to speak to.” She looks at me and moves abruptly to the aura meters.

The face behind the book table is a reassuring one: Paul Sevigny, the dowsing judge, is a bald and blue-eyed gentleman of sixty-nine with a buoyant grin and a circus ringmaster’s bright-green sports coat and pencil mustache. A twenty-four-year Air Force veteran, who took part in the invasion of southern France during the Second World War, Sevigny later became a Vermont state representative, then served for twelve years as assistant judge for the Caledonia County Superior Court. Dowsers lodging at a motel he owned in Danville drew him into the A.S.D. in 1965.

A bulging black notebook labelled “Paul Sevigny, Dowser” is stuffed with news clippings, pencilled records of nineteen hundred and eighty-seven wells he has dowsed so far, and lists of charities, from the Boy Scouts of America to Planned Parenthood, to which he has donated his dowsing fees. Sevigny does not follow up on his jobs but claims a success rate of ninety-seven per cent, on the premise that “people only call back to tell you when you missed.”

One of Sevigny’s favorite assignments was a 1984 commission from the Vermont Agency of Transportation to revive a spring that had gone dry in neighboring St. Johnsbury or to find an alternate source of water. “All Wright Spring had stopped flowing when a road was built out there,” Sevigny says. The State of Vermont, according to a five-page contract, hired him, as a consultant, for a hundred dollars a day. “The Consultant shall use any equipment deemed necessary to perform the work,” the contract stated. Sevigny chose a jackhammer bit, a mallet, and Dwin Gordon’s vein-diversion technique to whack the stream back on course. “I got it running full blast,” he says.

Sevigny is about to leave on a diversion job right now, as it happens, and he cheerfully agrees to take an observer along.

We turn in at the dirt driveway of Bernie Perkins, a resident of neighboring Waterford. When he hears the truck drive up, Perkins joins us, and Sevigny unloads his tools. He explains today’s job. “Last week, I dowsed a shallow clay well out here,” he says. “The bobber dipped seven times, indicating that water was seven feet down. When they brought in a backhoe and dug it, the hole was dry.” According to geologists, water leaks into a clay well from fine seams of water sand embedded within the clay, sometimes creating a mysterious pattern of disappearance and reappearance. The dowser’s viewpoint is different. Sevigny believes that the backhoe jogged the delicate vein of water he had divined, and moved it elsewhere. He has returned to chase it back toward the well. Looking like a gentleman golfer, in his conference-badge ribbons and sports coat, he plants a T bar in the ground, grips a mallet like a nine-iron, and begins clanking rhythmically at the bar in the direction of the empty well. “That oughta do her,” he pronounces after the seventh wallop.

d. ehrenberg

Perkins doesn’t bat an eye. “I’ve done this for him twice before,” Sevigny explains to me. “In one hole there was water, but not enough, so I diverted another vein into the well. The next morning, there was eight feet of water sitting in it. That made a believer out of him.”

Like a band of initiates, we stand silently staring into the hole, waiting for water to break through. “Sometimes they move slowly,” Sevigny explains, with Panglossian assurance. “Depends on the soil. In a few hours, she’ll be coming in.” Nothing shakes Sevigny’s confidence in his art. Sometimes, he admits, he misses, “but I think that’s because they didn’t drill the hole straight.” Or, as in this case, the rumbling of a machine might have deflected the vein. A.S.D. orthodoxy includes a litany of extenuating circumstances that banish self-doubt. The dowser’s intentions, or those of the people around him, may not be pure. Divining will fail if it is motivated by greed or vanity. Thus, a witch’s powers may desert him in the presence of a television camera or a scribbling journalist.

“Before I became a dowser, I used to have a closed mind,” Sevigny says on the way back to Danville. “I had to be shown before I believed anything. Now I believe everything until proved it doesn’t work.” When people laugh, he laughs back and flashes a printed cardboard sign that reads “They Can’t Get Your Goat If They Don’t Know Where It’s Tied.”

The slogan’s logic might seem opaque to a non-dowsing mind, but logic seems less and less relevant under the power of Sevigny’s airtight positive thinking. This, following a week-long suspension of disbelief in the land of the dowsers, has finally worn down my resistance. And so, as we pull up beside the Danville High School, I climb down from Sevigny's red Chevy Blazer and step directly through the looking glass.

When the sun sets, I'm in a field of dowsers—hundreds of them. Some are milling around the high-school parking lot in their rainbow-colored conference ribbons, and others are huddling together and massaging The Creamery's purloined silverware. In the hands of a grizzled Army major from Fayetteville, Arkansas, a silver-plated spoon I've been lent gets hot and sticky. When he hands it back to me, it bends into a corkscrew shape. And then, hearing me complain about an arthritic wrist, he rubs his hands together to create heat and heals it. So I spend the evening roaming the hills in a pack of New Agers and howling at the silvery moon.

Misty early morning, and the whitewashed calendar scene of Danville wavers like a mirage across the town green. As the day grows warm and clear, the events of yesterday seem as gauzy as the clouds lifting from the Green Mountains. The conference is over, the rain—predictably—has stopped, my wrist hurts again, and Bernie Perkins, out in Waterford, is still staring down at the dry clay of an empty well.

SOME months ago, Fred Neumann died of cancer. A short time before that, I dropped in on him and Marie, and found them napping, as usual, on their twin Stratoloungers. Fred hadn't been told about the successful dig on North Territorial Road, and when he heard about the seventy-five-foot hole his lips curved into a half smile. Was he surprised at the accuracy of his prediction? "Huh?" he said, retreating behind his American Gothic scowl. "What do you think I went out there for?"

Neumann listened with his customary air of heavy-lidded distraction to the news of a brotherhood of dowsers stretching from coast to coast. He ignored my stories about the earwig woman, the horse-aura dowsers, the divining judge, and the twisted Creamery spoon. But he studied the pendulums, bobbers, and Y rods that I had spread out on the coffee table. Finally, he selected a turquoise-beaded bobber from California, flicked it in the air

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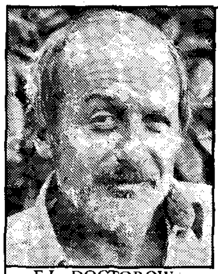
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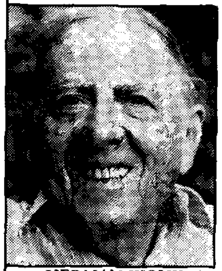
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like a fishing pole, and spoke. "Lots of people, they'll believe anything," he said.

"Maybe you have to be in California to work it," Marie observed diplomatically.

I told them about Dwin Gordon and his water-vein-diversion demonstrations. "Do you think they can move a vein of water out of a basement or into a well by pounding a stake in the ground?" I asked Neumann.

"What?" he said. "That well's got a four-inch steel casing around it! This thing," he added, holding out an L rod that folded up to resemble a nutcracker. "This thing looks like a TV aerial to me." Upon inspection, the "Telescoping Rod" (price: $24.95) did appear to be an eighteen-inch television antenna soldered onto a hinge.

"Here's the reason I can figure out," Neumann said with gentle impatience. "I've been locating water all my life." He positioned a beaded Y rod and headed for the bathroom, holding the rod at arm's length, like an artifact from the outer galaxies of lunacy. "This kind of stuff. It's loose. It'll flop down anywhere."

"Fred's just your basic witch," Marie whispered behind a cupped hand. She set down her crossword puzzle, shoved her pencil over one ear, and went to the kitchen. Reappearing with a Hefty bag, she whipped the bag open and began scooping up the dowsing gadgets and dumping them in. "That other stuff. You can have it," she said.

Neumann returned to the living room with one of his seasoned apple branches. "Now, there's a good stick," he said as Marie plopped the garbage bag onto the porch and sealed it firmly with a twist tie. Neumann grabbed my left hand and planted my right one on a fork of his apple branch, as if to guide me back to the path of reason. He had never heard of third eyes, bad vibes, the Biophysical Method, or the American Society of Dowsers. "Who needs that stuff?" he said. He had never had a moment of self-doubt in his life. There he was—as plain as a tree stump, as worn as the ancient hills—driving his stick inexorably toward the sewer pipe, with the lamplight anointing his bald head and the wand heaving back and nearly knocking him down. There was mystery, plenty of mystery, here, but not to Fred. "If you have it, you have it," he said. "If you don't, you don't."

—CAROLYN KRAUS

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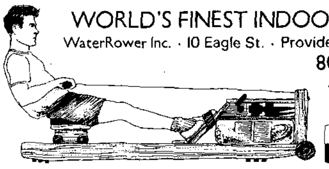

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THE THEATRE

Eurydice Down South

I DEFY anyone who has not seen or read Tennessee Williams' "Orpheus Descending" to make anything of the first act in the current revival at the Neil Simon, under the direction of Sir Peter Hall. The play was originally done in 1940, under the title "Battle of the Angels," and was revived, with its present title, in 1957; I missed both versions and decided to postpone reading the play until after I saw it. During that first act, I sat lost, without any idea of what was going on in the apparent chaos onstage. "Orpheus Descending," set in a large drygoods store in a Southern town, is about the passionate love of the proprietor's middle-aged wife, Lady Torrance, an Italian immigrant, for an itinerant young fellow named Val, who plays the guitar and evidently raises hell wherever he goes. Actually, this production is about Vanessa Redgrave, England's fiery, beautiful star. Her performance is fascinating and, God knows, abundant, but one rarely loses sight of her in the character (a synthetic anyway), and though her talents are manifold, mimicry is not one of them; her Italian accent is a shambles, like no other on earth. She is, one might say, everything except convincing.

Lady's father used to own a vineyard nearby, until he made the mistake of selling wine to blacks, whereupon the local bigots burned him to death and destroyed his house and land. Lady herself barely escaped with her life. Now her husband, Jabe, one of the cruellest and most bigoted of the lot, lies dying of cancer in an upstairs bedroom, while the townsfolk gather below and Lady and her young Val pursue their love affair, which ultimately leads to their horrifying deaths. That is but one horror among many in this deadly town, where the women, a gossipy, stupid lot, are at the mercy of their tough, redneck husbands.

As for the production—or overproduction—it suffers, and so does the script, from straining too hard for significance; the script tells its own story, assumes its own importance. The performance is blessedly free from amplification, but the lines are often difficult to make out. Many of them are lost to train whistles and shouts and loud music. Although Miss Redgrave carries all before her, there is some good work done in supporting roles. Kevin Anderson proves the right choice for the difficult role of Val; Tammy Grimes is entirely credible as the dumpy, fanatically religious wife of the bullying, dastardly sheriff, and so is Sloane Shelton as the meddlesome wife of a local roughneck. As a former lover of Val's, avid to get him back, Anne Twomey is memorably spooky. The play, come to think of it, is as much about the townspeople as about the lovers they destroy.

On the one hand, on the other hand. Although I have reservations about Miss Redgrave's performance, I hope to see her in role after role for the rest of my life. And although I had a rotten time the evening as a whole is not without merit. Later, of course, I read the play, and with growing admiration—noting, and not for the first time, that Williams is most a poet when he is least "poetic." Bird imagery abounds, giving the false effect of pretentiousness; "Orpheus Descending" may be symbolic, but it's certainly not pretentious.

—EDITH OLIVER

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[*From U.S. Supreme Court Reports*]

Blackmun, J., announced the judgment of the Court and delivered the opinion of the Court with respect to Parts III-A, IV, and V, in which Brennan, Marshall, Stevens, and O'Connor, JJ., joined, an opinion with respect to Parts I and II, in which O'Connor and Stevens, JJ., joined, an opinion with respect to Part III-B, in which Stevens, J., joined, and an opinion with respect to Part VI. O'Connor, J., filed an opinion concurring in part and concurring in the judgment, in Part II of which Brennan and Stevens, JJ., joined. Brennan, J., filed an opinion concurring in part and dissenting in part, in which Marshall and Stevens, JJ., joined. Stevens, J., filed an opinion concurring in part and dissenting in part, in which Brennan and Marshall, JJ., joined. Kennedy, J., filed an opinion concurring in the judgment in part and dissenting in part, in which Rehnquist, C.J., and White and Scalia, JJ., joined.

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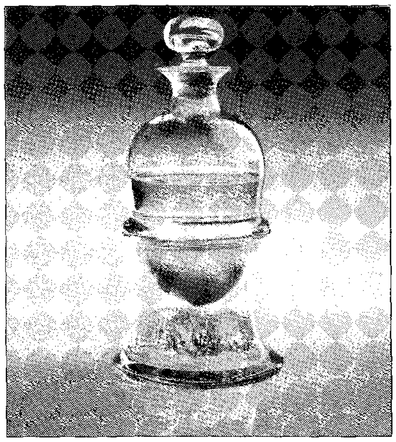

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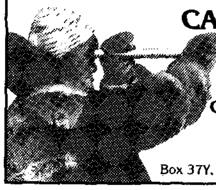

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AROUND CITY HALL

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AFTER a long-established ruler is overturned, there are bound to be dramatic changes in the atmosphere at the seat of government even before his successor is known. It was certainly a political revolution when in the New York mayoral primary, on September 12th, Mayor Edward Koch—to the astonishment of many New Yorkers and, it seemed clear, to his own great surprise—was defeated by a nine-point margin in his effort to be elected to a fourth four-year term as mayor, a role in which he had often said that he planned to serve "forever." Depending on the outcome of the general election, on November 7th, the man who moves into Koch's City Hall office will be either Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins, who would be the city's first black mayor, or former United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, the winner of the Republican primary, who would be the first mayor elected on the Republican ticket since 1965 and only the third since 1901. Since the primary, Giuliani and Dinkins have appeared frequently on City Hall's front steps, sometimes several times a day, surrounded by clamoring reporters and photographers and taking strong stands or receiving significant endorsements. The reporters' demanding voices ("What about the President's drug program? Who would you name as police commissioner?") can be heard inside City Hall in the rotunda, where until very recently Koch held stormy impromptu press conferences, and where everything is mostly quiet now.

Some people adjust to change better than others, and there are doubtless New Yorkers who are reassured to discover that in an arena in which there is about to be a whole new cast of characters some City Hall events go on—no matter who is mayor. Subway riders who came up out of the B.M.T. station at Broadway and Murray Street shortly after noon on September 22nd discovered that there was one such ceremony in progress—an annual affair that honors Nathan Hale, America's first spy. It took place in front of a statue of Hale that stands near the southwest corner of the lawn west of City Hall. The Mayor can still look out on this lawn from his office, although his lease there has been cancelled. The statue purports to show the young spy the way he looked—a handsome, bareheaded figure with bound arms and ankles—just before he was hanged by the British, and the ceremony marked the two-hundred-and-thirteenth anniversary of that hanging, on September 22, 1776. The often quoted line "I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" is inscribed on the circular pedestal of the statue, which was given to the city in 1893 by the state branch of the Sons of the Revolution. In fact, many historians believe that Hale never uttered those words, and that this brave, patriotic sentiment—a variation on some lines in Joseph Addison's "Cato"—was attributed to him by admirers eager to elevate his place in history. The Sons of the Revolution also contributed a nearby plaque that provides passersby with information about Hale and about the statue's sculptor, Frederick MacMonnies. It quotes MacMonnies as saying of the statue and its placement near City Hall, "I wanted to make something that would set the bootblacks and little clerks around there thinking—something that would make them want to be somebody and find life worth living." The plaque also says that a point not far from where the statue stands "marked the approximate spot where Hale was tried and executed." Many historic events have taken place in City Hall Park, but the trial and execution of Nathan Hale were not among them. (He was condemned without trial by General George Howe, at his headquarters at Fifty-first Street and First Avenue, and hanged in Artillery Park, at Sixty-sixth and Third.) It was in City Hall Park, for example, on July 9, 1776, that General George Washington sat on horseback while a young officer read to the American troops the Declaration of Independence, just brought up from Philadelphia.

"You're spectacular. Can you be normal?"

Much more recently, in August, 1988, a very different event of some historic importance took place there when the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who was in town on other matters, stopped by. Five months earlier, during the Democratic Presidential primary, Koch, pushing the candidacy of Senator Albert Gore, had said that if Jackson were elected President the nation would be bankrupt and militarily defenseless in a few weeks and, dwelling on what he described as Jackson's "character flaws," called him a liar, a fraud, an unstable person, and a coward. Not only were the attacks ineffective—Gore ended up with only ten per cent of the vote, and the flawed Jackson carried the city—but they angered many New Yorkers, white and black. It was after the Presidential primary that Koch's approval rating began to sink in the polls. Jackson, on the night he won the city, reminded the jubilant crowd around him not to forget the next big challenge: the 1989 mayoral race. And, as the Dinkins forces have often pointed out, it was the Jackson victory, made possible by a large turnout of blacks, that persuaded them that a black could be elected mayor here.

Jackson's visit to City Hall Park fourteen months ago was a true throwing down of the gauntlet. Uninvited, he stood a hundred yards from the Mayor's office (the Mayor, warned of Jackson's approach, had just zoomed off in his limousine), talking to a group of homeless New Yorkers who for the past several months had been living in the park. Their closeness to City Hall and their visibility had been an affront to Koch, as was their claim that they had no choice but to camp there, since the huge shelters that the Koch administration provided were unsafe. In his visit to the park's homeless, Jackson was accompanied by David Dinkins. Some of the park's residents—most of them have now moved to other locations—held up hand-lettered signs bearing Jackson's slogan, "Keep Hope Alive." Jackson told them, "Just because you're homeless doesn't mean you're helpless"—and, indeed, though the Koch administration fought in the courts to prevent it, between ten and twenty thousand homeless people were registered to vote in last month's primary. "If you want politicians who will bring you honor and not bring you shame, you must vote on it," Jackson told City Hall Park's unwelcome residents before he left.

If Jackson noticed the Nathan Hale statue, it seems doubtful whether he would have paid it particular attention—unlike those participating in the September 22nd ceremony, officially known as the "213th Nathan Hale Day Commemoration." The ceremony was not an elaborate affair. Eight or ten folding metal chairs were set up for invited dignitaries at the Broadway end of the walkway that leads from City Hall. Among those invited were representatives of the Sons of the Revolution; the city's Parks and Recreation Department; the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society of Connecticut, the state where Hale was born; and the Yale Club. (Hale was Yale, 1773.) In chairs set up across the walkway from this group were a dozen members of the Air Force Band of the East, stationed at McGuire Air Force Base, in New Jersey, and color guards for both the Army and the Sons of the Revolution. At right angles to the two groups were chairs for thirty members of a fourth-grade class from P.S. 40, which is on East Nineteenth Street between First and Second Avenues. The children had been invited to lay a wreath and recite a poem honoring Hale by William O. Partridge, the author of "Nathan Hale, the Ideal Patriot" (1902). In at least one respect, the fourth graders reflected the city's public-school enrollment as a whole: they were black, Latino, Asian, and white. Most of the other participants in the ceremony were white. This was not true of the audience—that is, the passersby who, on their way somewhere else or having nothing better to do, had stopped to see what was going on. The crowd was far more ethnically diverse than any that might have gathered in 1776 to view the hanging in Artillery Park or, for that matter, than the New Yorkers who assembled for the dedication of the Hale statue in 1893. There was no sign that the ceremony around the statue inspired any of them to "want to be somebody"—though, of course, one never knows. Probably the band music was the attraction. The audience looked quite a bit like the audiences that gather in City Hall Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the warm-weather months, when City Hall's music director, George Seuffert, presents temporarily at-liberty members of Local 802, the musicians' union, in lunch-hour concerts.

Most of the city's uniformed unions—those representing the police and the sanitation workers, for example—supported Koch in the primary, but a large share of the city's other unions were Dinkins backers. Possibly, the Local 802 musicians on Primary Day thought they knew something that other folks didn't: the band's first song was "Who's Sorry Now?" When someone asked whether this choice had anything to do with the primary—whether it might be a message for the Mayor—the answer was no, and the band swung into "New York, New York": the number, with its lyrics about this being the place where the little-town blues are melting away, that Koch arranged to have designated

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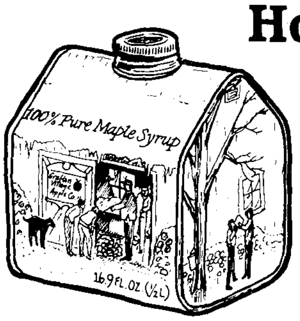

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as the city's official anthem. By coincidence, the first selection recalled Koch's 1982 primary race against Mario Cuomo (then relatively little known) for the Democratic nomination for governor. In November, 1981, before he had any thought of running for governor, Koch gave an interview to *Playboy* magazine in which he said that people who lived outside New York City were obviously wasting their lives. He described Albany, where the governor lives, as representing "small-town life at its worst . . . a fate worse than death." When the *Playboy* interview came out, just after Koch entered the governor's race, he said that surely upstaters were sophisticated enough to take a joke. Koch lost that primary—a bigger upset than the one on September 12th. The next day a bell ringer, giving a noonday concert on the carillon at Albany City Hall, near the state capitol, happily pounded out "Who's Sorry Now?"

THE Mayor did not attend the Nathan Hale Day commemoration. His official schedule that day read —as it had on several days since the primary—"No Scheduled Public Appearances." This was very different from his former daily agenda. As the Mayor's friend William Buckley wrote in his syndicated column after the primary, "If there was a public function without Koch, it meant that he was at another public function, going on simultaneously." Buckley, who a few months before had gone out of his way to mention that (like Ronald Reagan) he agreed with the Mayor's statement that most homeless people were homeless by choice, wrote that Koch had been done in by his "unquenchable thirst for candor"—which had caused him to make harsh (though accurate) statements about Jesse Jackson, which, in turn, had caused him to be unfairly maligned as a racist. The columnist seemed to count as regrettable the impending departure of Koch, whom he described as "a good man and the quintessential New Yorker." Buckley's view was in sharp contrast to that of another syndicated columnist, David Broder. In a column after the primary, Broder said, "The defeat of Ed Koch told us one thing only: after twelve years, even New Yorkers had had a bellyful of the most obnoxiously loudmouthed politician in the country." The outcome, he added, must have surprised the editorial board of the *Times*, which had "incredibly"—in contrast to "people of less-refined taste and intellect" who had "gagged on Koch's act years ago"—managed to overlook his municipal scandals and his "blatant race-baiting" of Jesse Jackson, and had endorsed the Mayor for a fourth term. After discussing what he saw as discouraging political news from other precincts, Broder concluded, "But let's not be too gloomy. Any year that ends Ed Koch's public career can't be all bad."

Someone who stopped by the Hale ceremony before it started was Giuliani. In transit from one campaign appearance to another, Giuliani, a dark-haired, intense-looking man of forty-five, caught sight of the children from P.S. 40 and introduced himself, possibly with a photo opportunity in mind. Soon afterward, however, one of the fourth graders demanded to know why he couldn't see David Dinkins instead. Others joined in, loudly chanting, "We want David Dinkins! Why can't we see David Dinkins!," as Giuliani stood there, evidently groping for some suitably quotable response. The fact that he was unable to come up at once with a smart crack ("He's somewhere around here," he finally said, lamely) does not, of course, disqualify him for the position of mayor, although some New Yorkers, after nearly twelve years of hearing Koch toss off smart cracks guaranteed to turn into thirty-second bites on the radio and television news, may have come to think of this talent as a mayoral credential, like administrative ability or politically useful ethnic roots. After all, the talented Koch had now been given the heave-ho in favor of a candidate hardly known for his bright sayings. "A PLODDING SYMBOL OF UNITY, DINKINS FAILS TO STIR NEW YORK PASSIONS" was an August 20th headline in the Washington *Post*, over a story mentioning that Dinkins had "little instinct for the jugular" and quoting Democratic operatives—affiliation not specified—who described him as "a clerk" and "a very nice man" who's "not quick on his feet" and "just wasn't up to it." The message seemed to be that, black or white, Dinkins didn't have "the necessities." When, a week after the primary, Dinkins delivered a speech to the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden told him affectionately, "Dave, that was the most boring speech I have ever heard."

AT the Hale ceremony, which Giuliani did not stay around for, wreaths were laid, colors were presented, and a number of speeches were delivered. The longest speeches were those by Henry Stern, Koch's Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, and Henry James, Jr., a dignified gray-haired gentleman who is a member of the Activities Committee of the Yale Club of New York, which he described as "the flagship of Yale Clubs," and the one to which Hale, whom he called "this heroic Yalie," would surely have belonged if there had been a Yale Club in 1773. (Asked later if he was related to the novelist Henry James, Jr., he said sternly, "They were the *Harvard* Jameses. We are the *Yale* Jameses." Demographers who dwell on the great diversity of this city's population tend to overlook the Yale Club factor.) James described the problems facing the sculptor—all MacMonnies knew was that Hale had "bright-blue eyes and flaxen hair"—and noted that since Hale was the first American spy, a statue of him, a copy of one at Yale, stands in front of the C.I.A. headquarters in Langley, Virginia. James did not mention that in June, 1986, the C.I.A. director, William Casey, announced that he favored removal of that statue, because Hale had "fouled up the only mission he was ever given." Casey, a native of Elmhurst, Queens, and a Fordham man, was apparently not moved by the fact that when the British captured Hale they found in the hollowed-out heel of his boot not only maps of secret British fortifications but his Yale diploma.

Hale had been betrayed, James told the assembled listeners, by "a Tory cousin—a graduate of Harvard." No one among the onlookers—it was not an Ivy League crowd—cracked a smile at this sidelight. Stern, when his turn came, said, "As a Harvard Law graduate, I must take exception to this unsupported story about Hale's being betrayed by a man from Harvard." He finessed the doubts about the one-life-for-my-country quotation, as well as the question of where the execution took place. In conclusion, he took yet another exception: to the use of the phrase "He's history" as a term of contempt. At Dinkins' headquarters on

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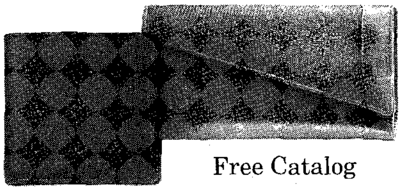

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Primary Night, the statement "He's history" was one of the more polite descriptions of the Mayor's new political condition. (The big headline on the front page of the *Village Voice*, which had endorsed Dinkins, put it another way: "HE'S OUTTA HERE.") To describe someone as "history" should not be an insult, said Stern, and he added, "It is good to remember former times." He urged those present to come back next year, when Hale's demise would be honored once again. Representatives of the Sons of the Revolution and the Yale Club will doubtless be back, but the chances are that Commissioner Stern, like many hundreds of people now busy making urgent phone calls and mailing out résumés in the great Koch City Hall recessional, will be doing his remembering from some other venue.

On the morning of September 25th, the city's Campaign Finance Board released figures showing that in the mayoral primaries the six candidates—four Democrats and two Republicans—had spent nearly twenty-seven million dollars. Koch had laid out three million eight hundred thousand, and Dinkins a million dollars less. Ronald Lauder, who lost to Giuliani by a two-to-one margin in the Republican primary but remains on the November ballot as the Conservative Party candidate, spent thirteen million eight hundred thousand dollars, most of it his own money. This was nearly five times as much as Giuliani had spent, and more than all the other mayoral candidates combined. The thirty-six thousand nine hundred and five votes that ended up in the Lauder column had cost him $373.62 apiece.

Lauder's heavy investment in the Republican mayoral nomination suggested that he had been paying close attention to Lee Atwater, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, who last spring said that this was the year when the Republicans would establish a "political beachhead" here by defeating Koch (he took it for granted that the Mayor would be the Democratic nominee) and winning for the G.O.P. what President Bush has called "the most powerful local office in America." Prospects looked bright for the Republicans on May 17th, when Giuliani announced his candidacy: polls showed him twenty to thirty points ahead of any Democrat running, despite the Democrats' five-to-one advantage in registration. However, things have been going downhill for the Republicans ever since. Not only has Giuliani's campaign been a spectacular study in political ineptitude but his chances were further damaged by Lauder's savage commercials during the primary campaign, attacking his fellow-Republican. ("Why are New Yorkers afraid of Rudy Giuliani? Because they *should* be.") The attacks were presumably encouraged by New York's Republican senator, Alfonse D'Amato, a strong Lauder supporter, whose relations with Giuliani have been deeply hostile. On September 28th, a poll taken by the Garin-Hart organization showed that of New Yorkers willing to commit themselves about the general election two per cent would vote for Lauder, twenty-six per cent for Giuliani, and fifty-four per cent for Dinkins.

In the last days before the primary, Cuomo—although he continued to insist that he was entirely neutral in the Democratic mayoral primary—became one of its principal movers. On City Hall's steps on January 1, 1986, the day of Koch's third inaugural—a cloudless morning, on which the Mayor said that he saw the whole City Hall scene suffused with "sweetness and light"—Cuomo had predicted that Koch would become the city's greatest mayor, because "he will accomplish the miracle of bringing us all together the way we have never been together before . . . the blacks, the whites, the people who are strong and people who have not yet had the opportunity to be strong." In his office later, Koch said that the Governor's remarks were irrelevant, because he had *already* brought people together. As this year's primary grew close, Cuomo suggested that New Yorkers, having looked over the field, would settle for "the old jalopy" they knew so well. Koch made it clear that he didn't resent being described as an old beat-up car if it meant that he would come out the winner.

The killing of a sixteen-year-old black youth, Yusuf Hawkins, in the Italian-American Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn on the night of August 23rd, and the explosive confrontations that followed, reminded voters of how painfully polarized the city continues to be. According to one of Koch's high-level campaign consultants, this cost him the election, especially after the Mayor, seeming to choose sides, advised blacks to be prudent and not march in Bensonhurst to protest the killing.

The Bensonhurst shooting seemed to alter Cuomo's view of the election. On September 4th, he marched at the head of the Labor Day parade beside Dinkins. During the parade, the Governor mentioned that, like Dinkins this year, he had been endorsed by most of the labor unions in 1982, and that it was their support that had made it possible for him to beat Koch. He then spoke of the city's great need for racial healing. The person who would win the mayoral race, he said, was "the leader who says to the people of the city of New York . . . 'I will bring you together.' " After the primary, Koch's campaign consultant, insisting that he wasn't being bitter, told Frank Lombardi of the *News*, "When Cuomo said, 'The healer will win,' everybody knew it was a way of signalling Dinkins." Not everyone on the Mayor's campaign staff agreed that the election had turned on the events in Bensonhurst. Jerry Skurnik, who had been working on Koch campaigns since 1977, said, "I think that after about twelve years people were tired of Ed Koch."

THE sense that it was Dinkins' dedication to racial healing which had carried the day was very strong, however, and in the weeks since the primary, politicians' agendas have been taken up with one unity rally after another. The City Council called theirs a Day of Reconciliation; it ended with a rendition of "We Are The World." Even the Republicans had their day of reconciliation. Giuliani stayed in New York and D'Amato in Washington, but the Senator did announce that he was endorsing Giuliani "enthusiastically." He used the word nine times, his eyes showing not a glimmer of such emotion. As reporters looked skeptical, he said, "Do you want me to do a dance?" In the next day's *Post*, a cartoon showed D'Amato endorsing Giuliani while preparing to throw up in a bucket.

As late as 6 P.M. on Primary Night, the Mayor was telling City Hall reporters, "We will prevail." His concession speech began just after 11 P.M., perfectly timed for the local news. It is traditional in such speeches for the losers to thank their families, their campaign workers, and others who have been important to them over the years, and to congratulate the victor on a well-run campaign. Koch did not introduce his brother, who was standing on the platform near him, but he did most of the other things. He congratulated Dinkins on a "superb" campaign. (No one wants to admit losing by nine points to mediocre competition.) He thanked thirty-four people, starting with his biggest contributors. Quite a few of those the Mayor thanked were not present. The number of media people on hand did not exceed the number of Koch supporters, but it was close. (Defeat is, if not an orphan, a neglected child.) Koch announced to the crowd, "I'm not going to run for governor," as if someone might have suggested the possibility. "Don't be sorry for me," he said. "Believe it or not, there *is* life after the mayoralty." Apparently, the Mayor's reputation for publicly lashing out and blaming others for whatever went wrong is very strong in people's minds. Afterward, commentators fell all over themselves commending him on his civil speech. President Bush telephoned to comment on his "graciousness." So did Jesse Jackson. Murray Kempton invoked Churchill's description of Field Marshal Montgomery—magnificent in defeat though insufferable in victory. Mario Cuomo called the concession speech "a shining moment in his life, and in the life of the city."

The next morning, the Mayor followed tradition and, as he has after each one of his elections, visited what he calls his "lucky" subway stop, at Lexington Avenue and Seventy-seventh Street. For years now, when a member of the public criticized one of his mayoral actions, he would say, "I'll get a better job—but you'll never get a better mayor." At the subway stop, a young man said sympathetically, "You'll get a better job."

"There is no better job," said the Mayor. —ANDY LOGAN

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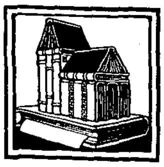
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SOMEWHERE, I have seen Hitler’s hold upon the German people explained by the fact that he addressed his audience in exactly the shrill way in which a German husband speaks to his wife. The Austrian playwright, novelist, and poet Thomas Bernhard, by the time of his death last February, at the age of fifty-eight, had collected the chief literary prizes of the German-speaking world, and his great critical and even (with his widely produced plays) popular success in that world perhaps derives from a similar trait: he was, in his writing, always on the verge of a shriek, and in the Germanic psyche shrieking constitutes proof of authenticity. One of the lines of Bernhard’s last play, “Heldenplatz,” characterizes Austria as “a nation of 6.5 million idiots living in a country that is rotting away, falling apart, run by the political parties in an unholy alliance with the Catholic Church.” In his novel “Correction,” the narrator spills a little of his spare bile on “a time such as ours when . . . every year hundreds and thousands of tons of imbecility-on-paper are tossed on the market, all the decrepit garbage of this totally decrepit European civilization, or rather, to hold nothing back, this totally decrepit modern world of ours, this era that keeps grinding out nothing but intellectual muck and all this stinking constipating clogging intellectual vomit is constantly being hawked in the most repulsive way as our intellectual products though it is in fact nothing but intellectual *waste* products.” And in his latest book to appear in English, “Wittgenstein’s Nephew” (translated by David McLintock; Knopf; $17.95), we find the following admonishment: “Let us not deceive ourselves: most of the minds we associate with are housed in heads that have little more to offer than overgrown potatoes, stuck on top of whining and tastelessly clad bodies and eking out a pathetic existence that does not even merit our pity.”

“You’re lost. This is Mom’s apple pie.”

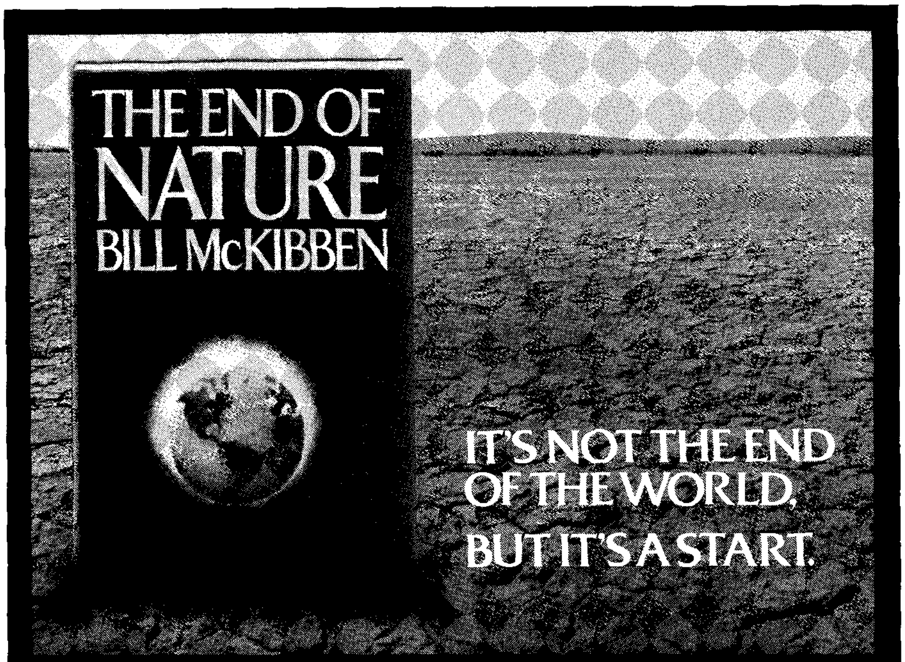
Bernhard, with his tyrannical repetitiousness and unpredictably placed italic emphases—like the blows of an impulsive fist—was a maestro of the music of the diatribe, its churning, its hammering, its omnivorous momentum, music such that any note *not* of dispraise seems a discord and a momentary weakening of the artist’s strength. Even his typographical signature—a resolute lack of paragraphing, an unrelieved march of unindented lines—shows hostility, not only toward the reader but toward the printer, for whom every alteration involves a vast displacement of type. Irascibility runs so consistently through Bernhard’s fiction that one is tempted to think it an involuntary trait, demonstrated in the author’s behavior as well as in his prose. One certainly suspects there is another side to his story of the official contretemps that occurred when he accepted the State Prize for Literature in Vienna. First, by way of tribute, according to “Wittgenstein’s Nephew,” he listened to “utter nonsense” and factually erroneous “idiocies” read out by a minister with “stupidity . . . written all over his face.” Then he responded:

> Just before the ceremony, in great haste and with the greatest reluctance, I had jotted down a few sentences, amounting to a small philosophical digression, the upshot of which was that man was a wretched creature and death a certainty. After I had delivered my speech, which lasted altogether no more than three minutes, the minister, who had understood nothing of what I had said, indignantly jumped up from his seat and shook his fist in my face. Snorting with rage, he called me a *curr* in front of the whole assembly and then left the chamber, slamming the glass door behind him with such force that it shattered into a thousand fragments. . . . Then the strangest thing happened: the whole assembly, whom I can describe only as an opportunistic rabble, rushed after the minister, though not without shouting curses and brandishing their fists at me as they went.

Bernhard’s acceptance, later, of the coveted Grillparzer Prize, bestowed by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, went no smoother. No one met the prospective honoree either outside or inside the hall. Bernhard decided to follow the crowd, and took a seat, with his entourage, in the middle of the auditorium. “The Vienna Philharmonic was nervously tuning up, and the president of the Academy of Sciences, a man by the name of Hunger, was running excitedly to and fro on the dais, while only I and my friends knew what was holding up the ceremony.” When Bernhard was at last found and asked, by an Academy member, to come to his reserved seat up front, the author balked: “I did not obey, because the request was made *in* a rather disagreeable and arrogant tone, and with such a sickening assurance of victory that, to preserve my self-respect, I *had* to refuse to accompany him toward the dais.” He yielded only when President Hunger himself descended from the dais and escorted him. Writers less honored than Bernhard can take comfort from his hard-won perception that “to award someone a prize is no different from pissing on him. And to receive a prize is no different from allowing oneself to be pissed on, because one is being paid for it." Prizes "do nothing to enhance one's standing, as I had believed before I received my first prize, but actually lower it, in the most embarrassing fashion."

Thomas Bernhard's embarrassments in life began early. He was illegitimate, born in 1931 in a Dutch convent that sheltered unwed mothers until their accouchement. His mother was the daughter of the Austrian writer Johannes Freumbichler, his father a peasant's son and a carpenter from Henndorf, in Austria, who died in 1943. When his mother married, Thomas found his stepfather and stepbrothers disagreeable, as he did the Johanneum Gymnasium in Salzburg. At the age of fifteen, he was apprenticed to an unsavory grocer in a suburb of Salzburg, and lifting heavy sacks in the dank cellar broke his health. In 1949, he spent months in a hospital death ward, and at one point was given last rites. To compound his misery during this time, his mother and her father, who had been a kindly mentor to the boy, both died. Yet Bernhard recovered enough to attend the Mozarteum Conservatory in Salzburg, to study music and theatre arts, to serve as a court reporter for the left-wing *Demokratisches Volksblatt*, and to compose, before he eventually succumbed to his debilities, over thirty works of fiction, poetry, drama, and autobiography. Though his typical hero is an intellectual trapped in mental paralysis, he himself wrote with energy, daring, and a shrewd sense of the sensational.

Publishers love to call books novels. "Wittgenstein's Nephew" has been labelled as one by Knopf, but really it is an undisguised memoir. Exactly one hundred pages long, it wanderingly tells of Bernhard's friendship with Paul Wittgenstein, the famous philosopher's nephew and a mentally unbalanced dandy once conspicuous around Vienna. Like "Correction" (whose fictional Roithamer, with his aristocratic background and English residence, is plainly patterned on the philosopher), it concerns a verbose and fascinated narrator's entwinement with a Wittgenstein. The entwinement in the memoir is based upon a shared fondness for opera and music, for Schopenhauer and Novalis and Pascal and Velázquez and Goya, for sitting in the Sacher coffeehouse caustically observing the other customers,



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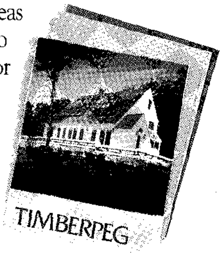

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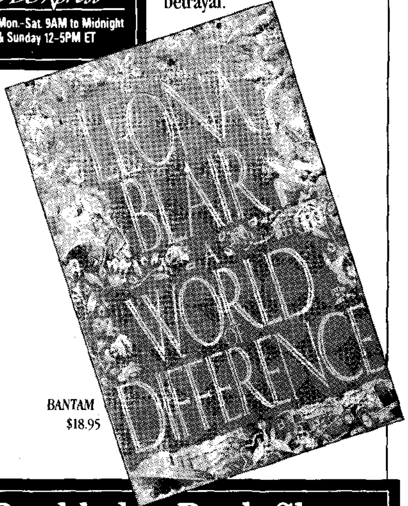

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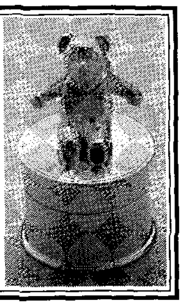

for sweeping castigations and "cosmopolitan fooleries." They also shared, we are told, "the counting disease"—a compulsion to count windows and doors from a vantage like that of a moving streetcar—and a habit of stepping on paving stones not randomly but according to "a carefully thought-out system." Bernhard and Wittgenstein both suffered from the "disease" of "always travelling, simply in order to get away from one place and go to another [without] finding happiness on arrival." To their more serious diseases Bernhard gives a romantic coloring of willed rebellion:

> Paul went mad because he suddenly pitted himself against everything and lost his balance, just as one day I too lost my balance through pitting myself against everything—the only difference being that he went *mad,* whereas I, for the selfsame reason, contracted *lung disease.* But Paul was no madder than I am . . . The only difference between us is that Paul allowed himself *to be utterly dominated* by his madness, whereas I have never let myself be utterly dominated by my equally serious madness; one might say that he was taken over by his madness, whereas I have always exploited mine.

As Paul becomes madder, Bernhard distances himself, and the reminiscence takes a rueful turn: "Quite deliberately, out of a base instinct for self-preservation, I shunned my friend in the last months of his life, and for this I cannot forgive myself." Remembering Paul's grotesque, emaciated, deathly appearance in his last days leads the author to some perversely complacent self-condemnation: "Watching him, I felt ashamed. I felt it shameful that I was not yet finished, as my friend already was. I am not a good character. I am quite simply not a good person." Paul had predicted to Bernhard, "*Two hundred friends will come to my funeral and you must make a speech at the graveside.*" In fact, only eight or nine attended the funeral, and his friend Thomas Bernhard stayed in Crete, writing a play that, he tells us, "I destroyed as soon as it was finished." He additionally confides, "To this day *I have not visited his grave.*"

The memoir, which takes Paul's mortuary prediction as its epigraph, has been delivered instead of the graveside speech. It offers no moral save the one that, as Bernhard stated on another occasion, man is a wretched creature and death a certainty. Its most vivid episodes reveal the author engaged in some display of reflexive irascibility;

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relatively little of poor, elegant, underemployed Paul shows through the domineering personality of the bad-tempered prose, which as it runs along blasts the "unbearable" German press, the "unspeakably perfidious thespians" who performed one of Bernhard's plays, literary coffeehouses whose "foul atmosphere [is] irritating to the nerves and deadening to the mind," and psychiatrists, "the real demons of our age." Bernhard's curmudgeonliness here comes close to being as droll a shtick as W. C. Fields'. His ferocious misanthropy, capable of generating nightmares in the fiction, almost sinks to the lovable.

MARTIN WALSER (not to be confused with the Swiss novelist, feuilletonist, Kafka precursor, and mental patient Robert Walser [1878-1956]) is described, among the jacket quotes on his novel "No Man's Land" (translated from the German by Leila Vennewitz; Holt; $18.95), as "the closest thing the West Germans have to John Updike." Really? "No Man's Land" seemed to this naturally expectant reader a joyless, terse, efficient small novel that manages an unforced flowering toward the end, in the inevitably theatrical milieu of a courtroom. Until then, the novel conscientiously occupies the heavily trafficked gray area between the two Germanys, wherein spying, conflicted loyalties, and domestic discontent are local industries. We have been there before, with John le Carré and other jaded singers of the Cold War blues, and Walser's intellectualized spy story, infused with generous quotations from Schiller's poetry and Schumann's lieder, doesn't, for all its earnestness and compassion, quite shake the feeling of a slumming expedition. A lot of the details seem to enter the narrative backward, with their symbolic import foremost, and the action is so telescoped as to rebuke rather than satisfy our appetite for suspense.

The hero, Wolf Zeiger, is an East German would-be pianist who gave his piano teacher a concussion and, before heading West in the wake of this gaffe, was enlisted by the Ministry of State Security for six weeks' training in spy school at Potsdam-Eiche. He is not too unhappily married to Dorle, who works at the West German Foreign Ministry. She doesn't have access to the NATO protocols, so Wolf sleeps

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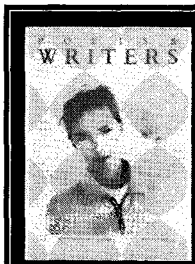

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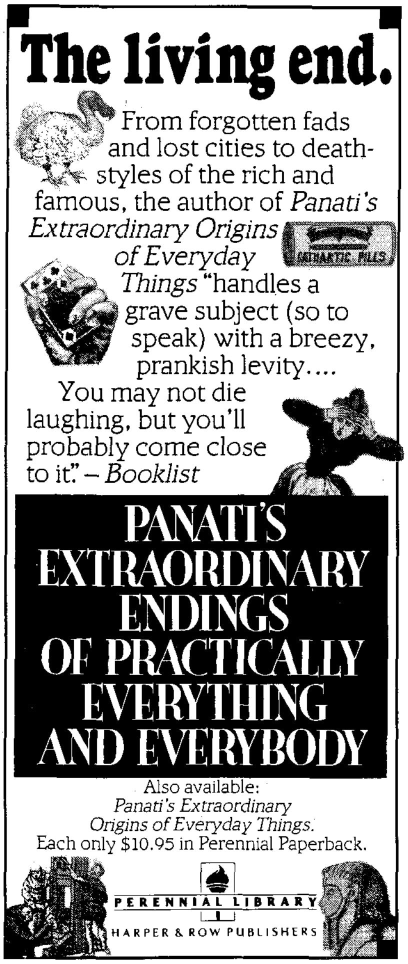
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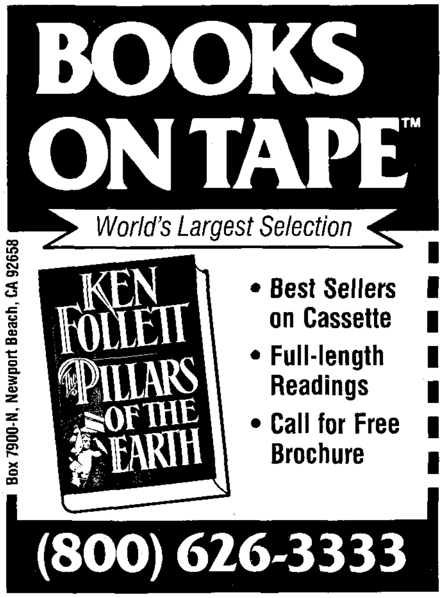
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with the secretary who does, Sylvia Wellershoff. Sylvia—"not fat, but fleshy. She had a bit too much of everything. Her mouth always hung open, as if the lips were too heavy"—is as giving erotically as she is intelligence-wise. Meanwhile, Dorle, approaching forty, wants a baby; and her superior at the office, smarmy Dr. Meissner, is casting a fond eye her way; and the Hungarian mathematician who lives in the apartment below has deduced, from the way Wolf plays Schumann only one hand at a time, that he is a spy; and Wolf is cooling on the idea of returning East at the end of his perfidious career. If this exposition of the plot seems hasty, so is the book's: all the elements, including opaque bits of the West's high-tech electronics and metallurgy and some plausible quick portraits of spymasters from the Communist side, are in place, but packed too tight to move. The novel seems neither a parody of a thriller, like Robbe-Grillet's "Les Gommes" or Queneau's "We Always Treat Women Too Well," nor the real, hard-breathing thing. Perhaps one difficulty for an American reader is that Wolf's justification to himself for treason against the West German state is the selfless aim of eroding the boundary between the two Germanys and thus helping to heal "this unhappily divided country." The cause of reuniting the pieces of Hitler's Reich, however dear to the German *Volksgeist*, is not one to touch heartstrings universally. Our President's rhetorical call to tear down the Berlin Wall is one thing, and the living memory of *Deutschland über Alles* another. In the absence of a motivation easier to empathize with, Wolf's fretful ambivalence seems scarcely to deserve such portentous pondering as "To what extent may one's thoughts contradict one's actions? How much irreconcilability can one bear within oneself?" His self-scorn—in the true unsparing style, I believe, of contemporary younger Germans—is so withering as to leave the reader small space where sympathy can grab hold: "Now he felt that he was perceiving himself with a kind of disapproval of which he couldn't get enough."

However, a number of scenes where geopolitical unease is translated into intimate behavior—a vacation that Dorle and Wolf take to the South of France, and certain hotel moments between Sylvia and Wolf—leap free of the plot's mechanism, and in the book's last third the terse, elliptic manner pays off in a rapid, no-fuss dénouement, brimming with surprises, including, if I read it right, the sly revelation that Dorle is pregnant but not by Wolf. Only in the last pages, in which the Zeigers' suspended but not destroyed marriage is presented as a metaphor for the temporarily divided German condition, does Mr. Walser's fondness for larger issues again crowd out the characters' vital tendencies. The novel is studied to a fault, and even a minor, contemptuously casual offering of Thomas Bernhard's like "Wittgenstein's Nephew" seems to come closer to literature, to breathe the air of freedom that permits epiphany. Bernhard is stingy with images and generous with repetitions, but once in a while he dives deep into the appearance of things. While he and Paul Wittgenstein are patients in different pavilions of the same hospital, he tries to walk to see him, runs out of breath, and sits on a seat outside and watches the squirrels:

> They appeared to have one consuming passion—to snatch up the paper tissues that the chest patients had dropped all over the ground and race up into the trees with them. They ran in all directions and from all directions, carrying paper tissues in their mouths, until in the gathering dusk all one could see were the paper tissues, a multitude of white dots darting hither and thither. I sat there enjoying the sight and naturally linking it with the thoughts that it seemed to conjure up automatically.

The mind-quickening automatism of this odd "multitude of white dots" is approached by Walser's low-affect prose here and there—Wolf feels peculiarly at ease on buses, where "everyone . . . lacked something," and he and Dorle feel happy and free on a desolate stretch of beach at the mouth of the Rhône, beyond an industrial sump, with fishermen tending their rods and the mistral driving "the sand in sharp jets against every unprotected particle of skin." In such unexpected details, life breaks through; we feel in touch with real people, whose dilemmas are only part of their substance, and with real sensations, whose significance is not imposed but arises automatically.

—JOHN UPDIKE

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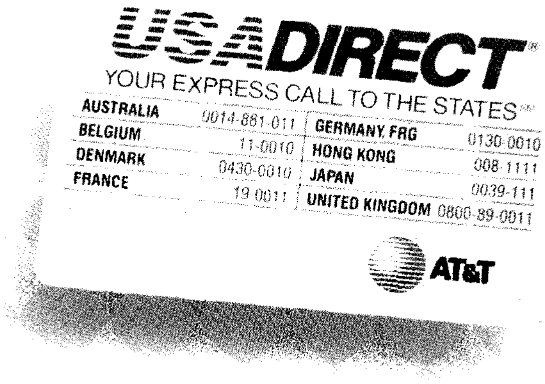
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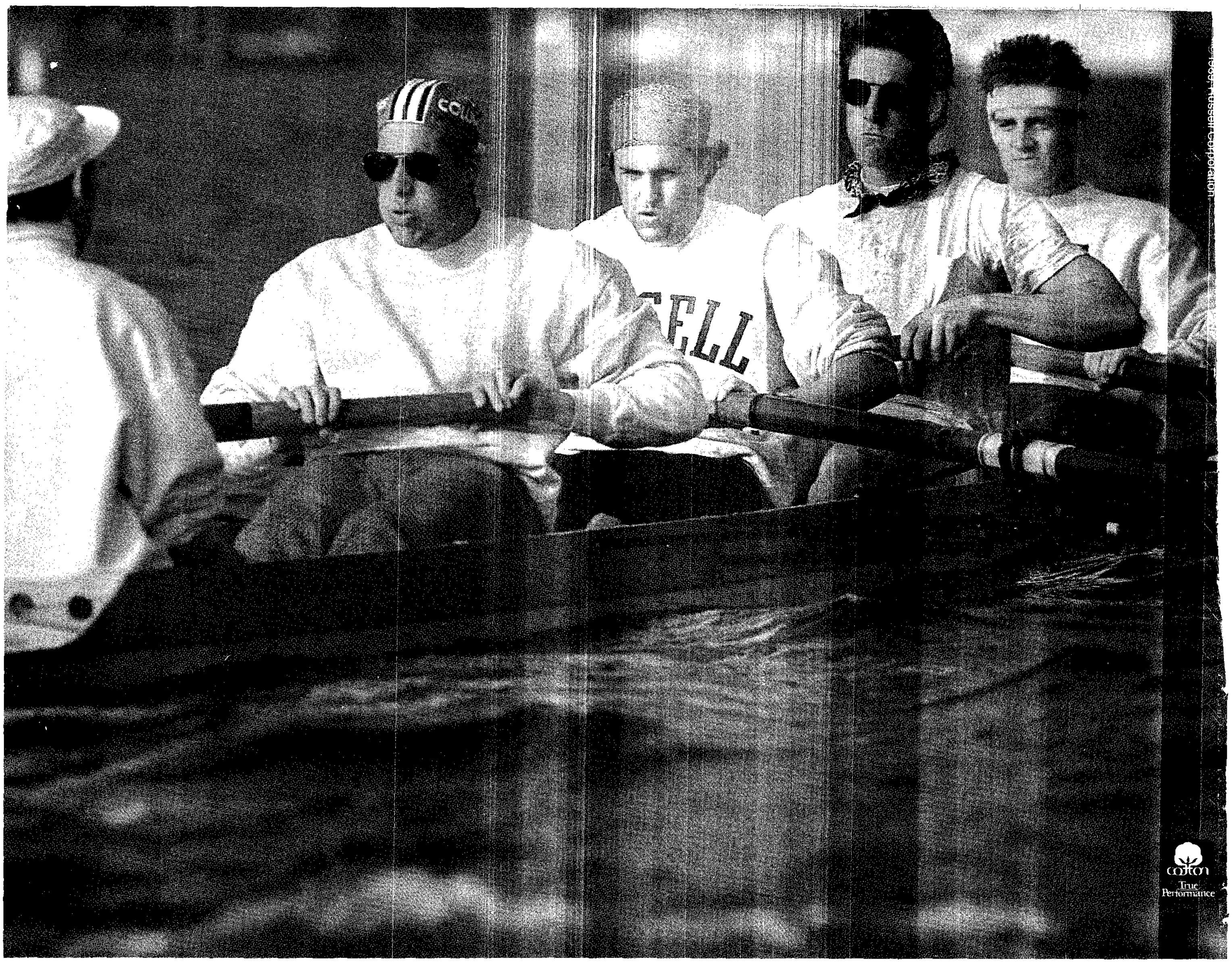
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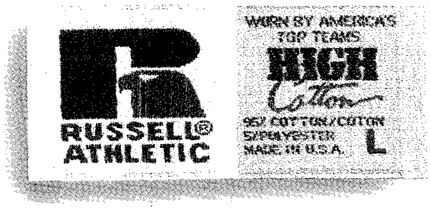
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